

**William Shakespeare's  
12 Comedies:  
Retellings in Prose**

**David Bruce**

Copyright 2017 by Bruce D. Bruce

Educate Yourself

Read Like A Wolf Eats

Be Excellent to Each Other

Books Then, Books Now, Books Forever

\*\*\*

In this retelling, as in all my retellings, I have tried to make the work of literature accessible to modern readers who may lack some of the knowledge about mythology, religion, and history that the literary work's contemporary audience had.

Do you know a language other than English? If you do, I give you permission to translate this book, copyright your translation, publish or self-publish it, and keep all the royalties for yourself. (Do give me credit, of course, for the original retelling.)

I would like to see my retellings of classic literature used in schools, so I give permission to the country of Finland (and all other countries) to give copies of this book to all students forever. I also give permission to the state of Texas (and all other states) to give copies of this book to all students forever. I also give permission to all teachers to give copies of this book to all students forever.

Teachers need not actually teach my retellings. Teachers are welcome to give students copies of my eBooks as background material. For example, if they are teaching Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, teachers are welcome to give students copies of my *Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose* and tell students, "Here's another ancient epic you may want to read in your spare time."

#### Dedicated to My Sister Brenda

Brenda wrote, "During COVID and when visitors were restricted from visiting their loved one in the assisted-living facility I worked at, a patient mentioned to me how much she liked spaghetti during a late-night conversation we had. She was a night owl like me. Her name was Dee. I called her "Gerdy." Then she would say, "Dirty Gerdy," and we'd laugh. Anyway, on my way to work I bought two spaghetti meals from Olive Garden. I left for work early that night. I went to work, set up outlet dinners in the dining room, went to her room and wheeled her down to the dining room where we had dinner together. At that time, the residents weren't leaving their room and had their meals alone in their room. It was nighttime and everyone was already in bed, so I didn't see a problem. She was so grateful and had enough food for three more meals. It was such a simple gesture, but during that time it meant so much to her and for me."

Brenda once bought a newspaper at a gas station on Thanksgiving and tipped the female employee \$5, and the employee cried.

Brenda wrote, "I do remember that. I also remember when George tipped a TeeJays waitress \$100, and she cried. Our family does a lot of good deeds all the time: I unload people's

grocery carts when the people are in those electric scooters. If they are alone with a few groceries, I'll leave cash for the cashier to pay for the groceries. I've had a lot of good deeds done to me when I didn't have a lot of money. It feels good to pay it forward."

She added, "I just have one more thing to add and then I'm done. I've had a lot of people in my life do good deeds for me when I was at a low point on my life. I was at a low point for a very long time. David, you know what you've done for me, and I can never thank you enough. Martha paid for antibiotics for me when I had strep throat and didn't have money. Rosa bought me groceries. Carla has done so much, and she had us over for Easter just after Chad died. When I say US, I mean all of my kids. She was so sick and ended up at the Emergency Room that same night. Frank gave me a car. And George buys my gas for me whenever he's in Florida. And Mom and Dad were good people. I had a lot of good influences in my life that made me be a good person. At least I hope I'm a good person. I try to be someone Mom and Dad would be proud of."

\*\*\*

The doing of good deeds is important. As a free person, you can choose to live your life as a good person or as a bad person. To be a good person, do good deeds. To be a bad person, do bad deeds. If you do good deeds, you will become good. If you do bad deeds, you will become bad. To become the person you want to be, act as if you already are that kind of person. Each of us chooses what kind of person we will become. To become a good person, do the things a good person does. To become a bad person, do the things a bad person does. The opportunity to take action to become the kind of person you want to be is yours.

## ***CHAPTER I: All's Well That Ends Well***

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

#### **Male Characters**

King of France

Duke of Florence

Bertram, Count of Rousillon

Lafeu, an old Lord

Parolles, a follower of Bertram

Rinaldo, a Steward

Lavache, a Professional Fool

#### **Female Characters**

Countess of Rousillon, Mother to Bertram

Helena, daughter to Gerard de Narbon, a famous physician, six months dead at the beginning of the play. She is sometimes called Helen.

An old Widow of Florence

Diana, daughter to the Widow

Mariana, neighbor and friend to the Widow

#### **Minor Characters**

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

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

#### **Scene**

Partly in France and partly in Tuscany

Rousillon is in the south of France

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

“He has abandoned his physicians, madam,” Lafeu said. “Under their medical practices he has made his life miserable with hope; he has stayed alive and suffered pain in the hope of finding a cure, but now he finds no advantage in the process except only the losing of hope by time. Time passed, and now he has lost all hope of recovering his health.”

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

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

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

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

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

“A fistula, my lord,” Lafeu replied.

A fistula is an ulcerous sore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Farewell.”

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

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

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

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

She exited.

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

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

Bertram and Lafeu exited.

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

“I am undone and ruined. There is no life for me, none, if Bertram is away from me. It is the same as if I were to love a bright particular star and think to wed it — Bertram is so above me in social rank. I must be comforted in his bright radiance and parallel light, not in his sphere. The sphere I am in is lower than the sphere that Bertram is in. I can see the light that comes from his sphere, but I can never reach the sphere that he is in.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Helena recognized him and said to herself, “He is one who goes with and accompanies Bertram. I treat this man as a friend for Bertram’s sake, and yet I know that he is a notorious liar. I think that he is in a great way a fool, and entirely a coward; yet these fixed evils of foolishness and cowardice are so suitably lodged in him that they find acceptance and take precedence when virtue’s steely bones look bleak in the cold wind.”

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

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

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

Parolles greeted Helena, “May God save you, fair Queen!”

“And may God save you, King!” Helena replied.

“I am no King,” Parolles said.

“And I am no Queen,” Helen replied.

“Are you meditating on virginity?”

“Yes,” Helena replied.

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

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

“Keep him out,” Parolles replied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

virgin, and that is most indubitably disrespect to your mother.

“He who hangs himself is a virgin in this respect: virginity murders itself.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dates are eighty percent sugar, and date sugar is simply ground-up dates. In this society, dates were often used instead of sugar to sweeten pies and porridge. Parolles’ words, however, contained sexual innuendo. A date is phallic-shaped fruit, and “pie” is slang for “vagina.” In addition, he was punning on the word “date,” one meaning of which refers to age. It is better to

have your date (fruit or penis) in your pie (food or vagina) than to have your date (age) appear in your cheeks in the form of wrinkles.

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

He used the word “pear” to refer to the vulva.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bertram could put his complete trust in a woman who would be a sweet disaster for him.

There were more names for the lovers whom Bertram could enjoy in the court of the French King. In addition to the names Helena had already mentioned, she now mentioned “a world of

pretty, foolish, adopted Christian names, that blind Cupid, god of love, gives when he acts as a gossip — a godparent — and gives out names for infants at the baptismal font.”

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

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

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

She stopped and sighed.

“What’s a pity?” Parolles asked.

Helena replied, “It’s a pity that wishing well does not have something tangible in it, which might be perceived, so that we, the poorer and lower born, whose baser and lower stars confine us to making wishes, might have real effects of our good wishes — that is, real and true and actually existing good fortune — follow our friends, and show what we can only think (rather than do), which never return us thanks.”

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

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

The page exited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Why under Mars?” Parolles asked.

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

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

“When he was predominant,” Parolles said.

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

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

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

“Why do you think so?”

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

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

“That’s for advantage,” Parolles said.

In other words, those were tactical retreats.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He exited.

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

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

“The mightiest space in fortune, nature brings to join like likes and kiss like closely related things. Two people may be greatly different in personal fortune yet be so like likes — so compatible — that human nature will bring them together so that they can kiss.”

In other words, human nature can bring together people who are vastly different in social class and yet are so compatible that they will kiss as if they were equals.

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

“Who has ever striven to show her merit who did fail to achieve her love?”

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

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

— 1.2 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bertram, Lafeu, and Parolles entered the room.

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

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

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

“I wish I had that bodily soundness — health — now that I had when your father and myself in friendship first tried our soldiership! Your father had a deep knowledge of the military service of the time and the bravest and most excellent soldiers were his disciples.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I wish I were with him!” the King said. “He would always say ... I think I hear him say it now; his praiseworthy words he scattered not superficially in ears, but grafted and implanted his words to make them grow there and to bear fruit ... ‘Let me not live’ ... this his good melancholy often began at the end and conclusion of an entertainment, when it was over and out. ‘Let me not live,’ said he, ‘after my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff — the charred wick

hindering further burning — of younger spirits, whose apprehensive and perceptive senses disdain all but new things; whose minds are completely occupied with devising new fashions of clothing and whose loyalties expire before their fashions.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I thank your majesty,” Bertram replied.

### — 1.3 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although the Fool had a lower social rank than the Countess, the Fool did have privileges, such as being able to speak frankly to those of a higher social rank. This Fool took advantage of that privilege and did not leave immediately. He would use the opportunity to engage in foolery, and then he would leave.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“In what case?” the Countess asked.

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

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

The Fool continued, “Service is no heritage.”

This proverb meant that servants neither inherit an estate nor leave behind an estate to be inherited after they die.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such friends would commit adultery with his wife.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Countess asked the Fool, “Will you always be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave?”

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

He sang:

*“For I the ballad will repeat,*

*“Which men very true shall find:*

*“Your marriage comes by destiny,*

*“Your cuckoo sings by kind.”*

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

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

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

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

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

The Fool sang:

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

*“Why the Grecians sacked Troy?*

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

*“Was this King Priam’s joy?*

*“With that she sighed as she stood,*

*“With that she sighed as she stood,*

*“And gave this sentence [wise saying] then;*

*“Among nine bad if one be good,*

*“Among nine bad if one be good,*

*“There’s yet one good in ten.”*

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

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

*“And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?*

*“Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.*

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

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

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

*“And all is dross that is not Helena.*

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

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

*“And I will combat with weak Menelaus,*

*“And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;*

*“Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,*

*“And then return to Helen for a kiss.*

*“O, thou art fairer than the evening air*

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

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

“Ilium” is another name for “Troy.”

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

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

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

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

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

*“Among nine good if one be bad,  
“There’s yet nine good in ten.”*

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

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

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

The Fool continued, “One in ten, did he say! If we might have a good woman born every time a blazing star — a comet or a nova — was seen or every time an earthquake occurred, it would

mend the lottery well — it would improve the odds of a man finding a good woman to be his wife. Right now, a man may draw his heart out before he plucks a good woman out of the lottery that is marriage.”

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

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

In 1 Corinthians 11:13, St. Paul wrote this: “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (King James Version).

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

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

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

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

He exited.

“Well, now,” the Countess said.

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

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

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

Definitely, the Countess thought very highly of Helena.

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

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

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

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

assault or a ransom afterward.

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

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

The Steward exited.

Helena entered the room.

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

“Helena’s eye is sick with love. I see that she is now in love.”

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

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

“You are my honorable mistress,” Helena said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Helena began to cry.

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

"Because I am not," Helena said.

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

The Countess said, "I say, I am your mother."

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

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

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

She wanted the Countess to be her mother-in-law, but she was unwilling to openly say this.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Countess continued, "Now I see the mystery of your loneliness, and I find the source of your salt tears. Now to all my senses it is completely obvious that you love my son. Fabricated

excuses are ashamed, against the proclamation of your passion, to say you do not love my son. I am completely unable to say that.

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

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

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

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

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

“Good madam, pardon me!” Helena cried.

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

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

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

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

“Don’t try to avoid answering the question,” the Countess said. “My love has in it a bond of which the world takes note. My love for him is that of a mother for her son. Come, come, disclose to me the state of your affection, for your passions have to the full informed against you.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Yes, madam, I have.”

“Why? Tell me the truth.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Yes, madam; in fact, I know I can.”

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

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Farewell," the King said.

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

The King and some of the lords talked together quietly.

Bertram, Parolles, and two lords also talked together.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“There’s honor in that kind of theft,” the first lord said.

“Commit the theft, Count,” Parolles said.

Bertram was the Count of Rousillon.

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

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

“Farewell, Captain,” the first lord said.

Bertram was the Captain.

“Sweet Monsieur Parolles!” the second lord said.

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

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

“We shall, noble Captain,” the first lord said.

The lords exited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bertram and Parolles exited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Indeed, across,” Lafeu said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What ‘her’ is this?” the King asked.

“Why, Doctor She,” Lafeu replied. “My lord, there’s a woman arrived, if you will see her. Now, by my faith and honor, if I may seriously convey my thoughts in this my light speech, I have spoken with one who in her sex, years, profession of what she is able to accomplish, wisdom, and constancy has amazed me more than I dare blame my weakness due to old age. The amazement I feel because of her I cannot lay to my old age. Will you see her? That is her request. Will you know her business?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lafeu said to Helena, "Come along."

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

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

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

Lafeu exited.

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

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

"I knew him," the King said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Helena replied, "If I fail to cure you, then accuse me of impudence, of having the boldness of a strumpet. Let my shame be publicly proclaimed. Let my maiden's name be calumniated by odious ballads sung about me. In addition, let my reputation be seared and branded in other ways. And, worse, if it is in fact worse than losing my maidenly reputation, let my life be ended with vilest torture by prolonged and extended stretching of my body on the rack."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## — 2.2 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A pudding is a sausage.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Oh, Lord, sir!” the Fool said. This was his all-purpose answer to any question. These words were used at court to avoid answering questions. These words could also be used to reply to statements. With different inflections, the meaning of the three-word answer could vary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is not the thing to say while being whipped.

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

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

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

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

In other words, she was wasting time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Hasten back home again,” the Countess said.

### — 2.3 —

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

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

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

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

“And so it is,” Bertram said.

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

Parolles interrupted, “So I say.”

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

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

Parolles interrupted, “So I say.”

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

Parolles interrupted, “Right! So I say.”

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

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

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

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

Lafeu interrupted, "— uncertain life, and sure death."

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

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

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

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

"That's it," Parolles said. "I would have said the very same."

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

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

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

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

Lafeu interrupted, "— very hand of Heaven."

"Yes, so I say," Parolles said.

Lafeu said, "In a most weak —"

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

Lafeu interrupted, "— generally thankful."

"That's what I was going to say," Parolles said. "You said it well. Here comes the King."

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

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

Parolles said, "*Mort du vinaigre!* Isn't this Helen?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She already knew her choice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She moved to the next lord.

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

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

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

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

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

The threat was that the lord would ask Helena to marry him. Any of the four lords would be happy to honor and marry her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lafeu said, referring to Bertram, “There’s one grape yet; I am sure your father drank wine, and we all know that good wine makes good blood, but if you are not an ass, I am a fourteen-year-old youth. I have known you already, and I know that you are an ass.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The mere word ‘honor’ is a slave that appears and is debauched on every tomb, on every grave it is a lying trophy, and as often it is dumb and silent where dust and damned oblivion is

the tomb of honored bones indeed. The word 'honor' is often given to those deceased who do not deserve it and as often withheld from those deceased who do deserve it.

"What should now be said? If you can like this creature of God as a maiden, I can create the rest. Virtue and she herself are her own dower; honor and wealth are her dower from me."

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

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

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

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

"My honor's at the stake," the King said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Speak; give me your answer."

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

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

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

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

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

"I take her hand," Bertram said, doing so.

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

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

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

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

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

"What is your pleasure, sir? What do you want?"

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

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

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

"Recantation! My lord! My master!" Parolles said.

"Yes," Lafeu replied. "Aren't the sounds I speak a language?"

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

Lafeu asked, "Are you companion to the Count Rousillon?"

The word "companion" meant both "rascal" and "associate."

"To any Count, to all Counts, to what is man," Parolles replied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lafeu said, “Give me your hand.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lafeu exited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Who? God?”

“Yes, sir.”

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

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

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

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

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

He exited.

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

Bertram entered the room.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Possibly, a kinky-wicky wife is one who kicks — humps — when her husband's wick — penis — is inside her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A proverb stated, “Marrying is marring.”

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

— 2.4 —

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

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

The Countess of Rousillon, Bertram’s mother, was now Helena’s mother-in-law.

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

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

“If she is very well, what is ailing her, so that she’s not very well?” Helena asked.

“Truly, she’s very well indeed, but for two things,” the Fool said.

“What two things?”

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

Parolles entered the room.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Why, I say nothing,” Parolles said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What more does he command?”

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

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

In this culture, good wives were obedient wives.

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

“Please do,” Helena said.

Parolles exited.

Helena said to the Fool, “Come, sirrah.”

They exited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Sir?" Parolles said.

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

The implication was Parolles was a very good mannequin.

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

"She is."

"Will she leave tonight?"

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

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

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

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

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

Parolles replied, "I don't know how I have deserved to run into my lord's displeasure."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lafeu exited.

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

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

Parolles heard the doubt in his voice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this culture, good wives were obedient wives.

“Come, come, no more of that,” Bertram said.

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

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

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

“Please, sir, I beg your pardon,” Helena said.

“Well, what do you want to say to me?”

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

“What would you have?” Bertram asked.

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

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

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

He was unwilling to kiss her.

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

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

Then Helena said to Bertram, “Farewell.”

Helena exited; she and her attendant talked quietly.

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

He said to Parolles, "Let's go, and prepare for our flight."

Parolles replied, "Bravely, *coragio!*"

"*Coragio*" is Italian for "courage."

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### — 3.2 —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Old ling" means "salted codfish." In this society, the word "salt" is an adjective meaning "lecherous," and "cod" is a word meaning "male genitals," so the Fool was using the phrase "old ling" to refer to men. He meant that the men and the women of the French King's court were superior to the men and women of Count Rousillon's court, and so he cared no longer for the Isbel in Rousillon.

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

Reading the letter, the Countess said, "What have we here?"

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

He exited.

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

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

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

The Countess continued to read the letter out loud:

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

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

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

"What is the matter?" the Countess asked.

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

"Why should he be killed?" the Countess asked.

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

The Fool was punning. A soldier standing in the line of fire can be shot and killed, so running away improves the soldier's chance of survival. "Standing" is also something that a penis does,

and that can lead to the begetting of children. Both military men and fathers-to-be die. In this society, one meaning of “to die” is “to have an orgasm.”

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

The Fool exited.

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

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

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

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

“Be calm,” the Countess advised Helena.

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

She had felt so many strokes of joy and grief that not knowing which to feel — What had happened to her son? Something good or something bad? Was he dead or alive? — made her cry from vexation.

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

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

She read the letter out loud:

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

Helena said, “This is a dreadful sentence.”

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

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

The Countess said to Helena, “Please, lady, have a better mood and disposition. If you appropriate all the griefs and say that they are yours, you rob me of a share of them. He was my son, but I wash his name out of my blood, and you are my only child.”

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

“Yes, madam,” the second gentleman said.

“And his intention is to become a soldier?”

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

"Will you return there?" the Countess asked.

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

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

She said, "It is bitter."

The Countess asked, "He wrote that in his letter?"

"Yes, madam."

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

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

One meaning of the word "mistress" was "female boss."

She asked the two gentlemen, "Who was with him?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Countess and the two gentlemen exited.

Alone, Helena said to herself, "*Until I have no wife, I have nothing in France.*" Nothing in France, until he has no wife! You shall have no wife, Rousillon, none in France. That way, you will have everything again. Poor lord! Is it I who am chasing you from your country and exposing those tender limbs of yours to the events of the none-sparing war? And is it I who am driving you from the light-hearted, sportive court, where you were shot at with fair eyes, to a

battlefield where you will be the mark of smoky muskets? Oh, you bullets, you leaden messengers, that ride upon the violent speed of fire, may you fly with false aim. May you move the always-peering air that sings with piercing.”

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

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

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

### — 3.3 —

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

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

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

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

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

### — 3.4 —

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

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

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

*“I am Saint Jaques’ pilgrim, thither gone:*

*“Ambitious love hath so in me offended,*

*“That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,*

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

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

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

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

*“His name with zealous fervor sanctify:*

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

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

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

*“Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth:*

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

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

In the letter Helena said that she would be a religious pilgrim and visit the shrine of Saint Jaques. This is the shrine of Saint Jaques le Grand in Santiago le Compostela in northwestern Spain. France is between Spain and Italy. Rather than going west to Spain, Helena would go east to Florence, Italy, where her husband, Bertram, was. From Florence,

In the letter she compared herself to the goddess Juno, wife of Jupiter, King of the gods. Juno had given to Hercules twelve labors that seemed impossible to accomplish. Helena’s intention, she wrote, was to embrace Death and die, thus setting her husband free from his marriage.

The Countess said, “Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words! Rinaldo, you never lacked good sense as much as now when you let her leave in this way. Had I spoken with her, I could have well diverted her intentions, which by writing me this letter she has prevented.”

“Pardon me, madam,” the Steward said. “If I had given you this last night, she might have been overtaken, and yet she writes that pursuit would be only in vain.”

“What angel shall bless this husband who is unworthy of his wife?” the Countess said. “He cannot thrive unless her prayers, which Heaven delights to hear and loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath of greatest justice.

“Write, write, Rinaldo, to this husband who is unworthy of his wife. Let every word weigh heavy on — emphasize — her worth that he does weigh too lightly; that he weighs her too lightly is my greatest grief. Though he little feels it, set it down sharply.

“Dispatch the most convenient messenger: When it happens that he hears that she is gone, he will return; and I hope that she, hearing that he has returned, will speed her foot again, led here by pure love.

“Which of them — Bertram or Helena — is dearest to me, I am unable to discern.

“Provide a messenger.

“My heart is heavy, and my old age makes me weak. Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.”

— 3.5 —

An old widow stood outside the walls of Florence along with her daughter, Diana. With them were her friend and neighbor Mariana and other citizens. The Florentine army had won a military victory and was returning to Florence, and the old widow and her companions had come to see the army.

The widow said, “Come, for if they approach the city, we shall entirely lose the sight.”

They began to walk to a position that they thought the army would pass by.

Diana said, “They say the French Count of Rousillon has done very honorable service.”

“It is reported that he has captured their greatest commander,” the widow said, “and that with his own hand he slew the Duke of Siena’s brother.”

A military trumpet sounded from a different direction the widow and her companions expected. The sound was a tucket, which identified a particular individual.

The widow said, “We have lost our labor; they have gone a different way. Listen! You may know who is arriving by their trumpets.”

“Come, let’s return to Florence again, and satisfy ourselves with what other people tell us about the return of our army,” Mariana said.

She then said, “Well, Diana, take heed of this French Count — the Count of Rousillon. The honor of a maiden is her name — the name of virgin — and no legacy is so rich as chastity.”

The widow said to her daughter, Diana, “I have told my neighbor Mariana how you have been solicited by a gentleman who is the Count of Rousillon’s companion.”

“I know that knave — hang him!” Mariana said. “He is named Parolles, and he is a filthy officer — a pander — in those suggestions he makes to the young Count. Beware of both of them, Diana; their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these instruments of lust are not the things they seem to be. Many maidens have been seduced by them, and the misery is that their example, that so terribly shows the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade other maidens from being seduced. Instead, the other maidens are limed with the twigs that threaten them. They are like birds that have been captured in sticky birdlime. I hope I don’t need to advise you further, but I hope your own grace and virtue will keep you where you are, even though there were no further danger known but the modesty that is so lost.”

Of course, there was a further danger in a young woman losing her virginity before being married — pregnancy. Another danger was becoming what was known as “damaged goods”; if men knew that she had lost her virginity, they would refuse to marry her.

Diana replied, “You shall not need to fear me losing my virginity.”

“I hope so,” the widow said.

Helena, who was wearing the clothing of a religious pilgrim, walked toward them.

The widow said, “Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lodge at my house; thither the pilgrims send one another. I’ll question her.”

The widow said to Helena, “May God save you, pilgrim! Whither are you bound?”

“To the shrine of Saint Jaques le Grand. Where do the palmers — religious pilgrims — lodge, I ask you?”

The widow replied, “At the inn bearing the sign of Saint Francis here beside the city gate.”

“Is this the way?” Helena asked.

“Yes, indeed, it is,” the widow said.

They heard military drums coming toward them.

The widow said, “Listen! They are coming this way.”

She said to Helena, “If you will tarry, holy pilgrim, just until the troops have come by, I will conduct you where you shall be lodged. I will do this because I think I know your hostess as well as I know myself.”

“Is the hostess yourself?” Helena asked. She had a quick intelligence.

“If that shall please you, pilgrim, yes,” the widow said.

“I thank you, and I will wait until you have leisure to show me the way,” Helena said.

“You came, I think, from France?”

“I did so.”

“Here you shall see a countryman of yours who has done worthy service,” the widow said.

“What is his name, please?” Helena asked.

“The Count Rousillon. Do you know such a person?”

“Only by hearsay, and what I have heard describes him as being very noble. I don’t know what he looks like.”

Diana said, “Whatever he is, he’s well esteemed here. He stole away from France, it is reported, because the King had married him against his liking. Do you think it is true?”

“Yes, certainly, it is entirely the truth,” Helena said. “I know his wife.”

“A gentleman who serves the Count of Rousillon reports only coarse things about her,” Diana said.

Helena asked, “What’s his name?”

“Monsieur Parolles,” Diana said.

“Oh, I believe the same as him,” Helena said. “As the subject of praise, or compared to the worth of the great Count of Rousillon himself, she is too mean and common to have her name repeated. All her merit is a well-guarded chastity — I have not heard her chastity questioned.”

“Alas, poor lady!” Diana said. “It is a hard bondage to become the wife of a husband who detests her!”

The widow said, “I am sure, good creature, that wherever she is, her heart weighs sadly. This young maiden here — my daughter, Diana — might do her a shrewd turn, if she pleased.”

Displaying her quick intelligence, Helena asked, “How do you mean? Is it perhaps that the amorous Count solicits her for an unlawful purpose?”

“He does indeed,” the widow said, “and he bargains with all who can in such a suit corrupt the tender honor of a maiden. But she is armed for him and keeps her guard in the most honest defense of her chastity.”

Mariana said, “May the gods forbid she do anything else!”

“Now the soldiers are coming,” the widow said.

Drums sounded, and flags fluttered. Bertram, Parolles, and other soldiers marched into view.

The widow pointed out some notable soldiers: “That is Antonio, the Duke of Florence’s eldest son. That is Escalus.”

“Which is the Frenchman?” Helena asked.

Diana pointed and said, “He is the soldier with the plume. He is a very gallant fellow. I wish that he loved his wife. If he would be more virtuous, he would be much better looking. But isn’t he a handsome gentleman?”

“I like him well,” Helena said.

“It is a pity he is not virtuous,” Diana said. “There’s that same knave who leads him to these places.”

She was unwilling to use the word “brothels.”

She continued, “If I were his wife, I would poison that vile rascal.”

“Which is he?” Helena said.

“That jackanapes — buffoon — wearing all the military sashes,” Diana said. “Why is he melancholy?”

“Perhaps he was hurt in the battle,” Helena said.

Parolles said to himself, “Lose our drum! Damn!”

The military drum was a symbol of regimental honor, just like the military colors — the flag.

Mariana said, “He’s shrewdly vexed at something. Look, he has spied us.”

“Indeed!” the widow said, looking at Parolles. “Hang you!”

Mariana said, “And hang your courtesy, because you are a ring-carrier!”

A ring-carrier is a pander, a go-between. Parolles was currently engaged in trying to convince Diana to sleep with Bertram. The pander could carry a real ring, or the promise of a ring. Many maidens give up their virginity to men who falsely promised to marry them.

Bertram, Parolles, and the other soldiers exited.

“The troop is past,” the widow said. “Come, pilgrim, I will bring you to where you shall stay. Of penitents bound by oath there’s four or five already at my house who are heading to the shrine of great Saint Jaques.”

“I humbly thank you,” Helena said. “If it pleases this matron and this gentle maiden to eat with us tonight, I will gratefully pay the charge, and to reward you further, I will bestow some precepts on this virgin that are worthy of note.”

They replied, “We accept your offer kindly.”

— 3.6 —

Bertram and two French lords spoke together in their military camp near Florence. The two French lords, who were brothers named Dumain, had earlier visited the Countess of Rousillon; they had carried a letter to Helena. (See 3.2.)

The second lord said, “My good lord, put Parolles to the test; let him have his way. Let him attempt to get the regimental drum back.”

The first lord said, “If your lordship does not find that he is a hilding — a good-for-nothing fellow — have no more respect for me.”

“On my life, my lord, I swear that Parolles is a bubble, an empty thing,” the second lord said.

“Do you think I am so far deceived in him?” Bertram said. “Do you really think that I am that mistaken in my estimate of his character?”

“Believe it, my lord,” the second lord said. “To my own direct knowledge, without any malice, and speaking about him as if he were my relative, he’s a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of not one good quality worthy your lordship’s maintenance. You pay for his food and lodging, but trust me, he is not worth the expense.”

“It is fitting that you know him for what he is,” the first lord said, “lest, with you trusting too much in his virtue, which he doesn’t have, he might during some great and trusty business fail you in a major crisis.”

“I wish I knew in what particular action I could test him,” Bertram said.

“There is none better than to let him rescue his drum,” the first lord said, “which you hear him say so confidently he will undertake to do.”

The second lord said, “I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprise and capture him; such soldiers I will have, whom I am sure he will think are from the enemy. We will bind and hoodwink — blindfold — him so that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the military camp of the adversaries, when in reality we will bring him to our own tents. Your

lordship should be present at his examination. If, for the promise of sparing his life and in the highest compulsion of base fear, he does not offer to betray you and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgment in anything. He will betray you in return for the promise that his life will be spared.”

“Oh, for the love of laughter,” the first lord said, “let him ‘rescue’ his drum from the enemy. He says he has a stratagem to do it. When your lordship sees the bottom — the complete lack — of his success in it, and to what metal, as well as mettle, this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you do not give him John Drum’s entertainment, your inclination to like him cannot be removed.”

“John Drum’s entertainment” means “rejection” and “unceremonious dismissal.”

The first lord then looked up and said, “Here he comes.”

Parolles walked over to the group.

The second lord whispered to Bertram, “Oh, for the love of laughter, do not hinder the honor of his design. Let him rescue and fetch away from the enemy his drum in any case.”

“How are you now, monsieur!” Bertram said to Parolles. “This drum sticks sorely in your disposition — it wounds your state of mind.”

“A plague on it!” the first lord said. “Let it go! It is only a drum.”

“‘Only a drum!’” Parolles said. “Is it ‘only a drum’? A drum lost in that way! That was an ‘excellent’ command — to charge in with our cavalry upon our own flanks, and to attack our own soldiers!”

The first lord said, “That was not to be blamed upon the command of the military engagement. It was a disaster of war that Julius Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.”

“Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success,” Bertram said. “We won the battle, but we suffered some dishonor in the loss of that drum, and that drum cannot be recovered.”

“It might have been recovered,” Parolles said.

“It might,” Bertram said, “but it cannot now be recovered.”

“It is to be recovered,” Parolles said. “Except that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer — all too often people don’t receive the credit they deserve for their accomplishments; that credit goes to people who don’t deserve it — I would have that drum or another like it, or *‘hic jacet.’*”

*“Hic jacet”* is Latin for “Here lies.” It was the beginning of many epitaphs. Parolles was saying that if he could be sure to get the credit he would deserve, he would get the drum back or die in the attempt.

Bertram said, “Why, if you have a stomach — the courage — for it, monsieur, if you think your practical skills in strategy can bring this instrument of honor again into its native quarter, then be courageous and of great spirit in the enterprise and go on and do it. I will honor the attempt for a worthy exploit: if you speed well and succeed in it, the Duke shall both speak of

it and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness. The Duke shall reward you well with words and with material gifts.”

“By the hand of a soldier, I swear that I will undertake it,” Parolles said.

“But you must not now slumber in it,” Bertram said. “You must act quickly.”

“I’ll go about it this evening,” Parolles said, “and I will immediately write down the problems I will need to solve, encourage myself in my certainty of overcoming those problems, and put myself into my mortal preparation for either suffering death or causing others to suffer it. By midnight look to hear further from me.”

“May I be bold enough to acquaint his grace the Duke of Florence that you are going to get the drum back?” Bertram asked.

“I don’t know what the outcome of my attempt will be, my lord,” Parolles said, “but I vow to attempt to recover the drum.”

“I know you are valiant,” Bertram said, “and I will vouch for the capability of your soldiership. Farewell.”

“I do not love many words,” Parolles said, and then he exited.

The second lord said, “He does not love many words — no more than a fish loves water. Isn’t this a strange fellow, my lord, who so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done? He says that he will be damned if he doesn’t do this act, and yet he would rather be damned than to do it.”

The first lord said to Bertram, “You do not know him, my lord, as we do. It is certain that he will steal himself into a man’s favor and for a week escape a great deal of discoveries, but when you find him out, you have him ever after. Parolles can fool a man for a week, but then the man wises up and knows Parolles’ true character forever.”

Bertram said, “Do you think he will make no attempt at all of doing this thing that he so seriously says that he will do?”

“He will make no attempt, none in the world,” the second lord said. “Instead, he will return with an invented story and clap upon you two or three probable lies, but we have almost hunted him down. You shall see his fall tonight; for indeed he is not worthy of your lordship’s respect.”

“We’ll make some entertainment for you with the fox before we metaphorically skin him,” the first lord said. “He was first smoked out and exposed by the old lord Lafeu. When Parolles’ disguise and he are parted, tell me what a sprat — a small fish — you shall find him. You shall see that he is a sprat this very night.”

“I must go look after my twigs,” the second lord said. “He shall be caught.”

The twigs were metaphorical and referred to a trap. Twigs and branches were coated with sticky birdlime as a way to catch birds.

“Your brother shall go along with me,” Bertram said to the second lord.

“As it pleases your lordship,” the second lord said. “I’ll leave you.”

He exited.

Bertram said to the first lord, "Now I will lead you to the house, and show you the lass I spoke of."

"But you say she's chaste," the first lord said.

"That's her only fault," Bertram said. "I spoke with her only once and found her wondrously cold, but I sent to her, by this same foolish coxcomb — Parolles — whom we have in the wind, tokens and letters that she sent back to me, and this is all I have done. She's a beautiful creature. Will you go with me and see her?"

"With all my heart, my lord."

— 3.7 —

Helena and the widow spoke together in a room in the widow's house.

Helena said, "If you doubt that I am Bertram's wife, I don't know how I shall assure you further without losing the grounds I work upon. In order for my plan to work, I need to keep my presence in Florence hidden from my husband."

"Although my estate has fallen, I was well born," the widow said. "I have never been acquainted with this kind of business, and I would not expose my reputation now to any act that might stain it."

"Nor would I wish you to," Helena said. "First, trust me when I say that the Count of Rousillon is my husband. Also trust that what I have spoken to you with your sworn secrecy is true from word to word. If you do these two things, then you cannot err by bestowing the good aid that I shall borrow from you."

"I should believe you," the widow said, "for you have showed me that which well proves you're great in fortune."

"Take this purse of gold," Helena said, "and let me buy thus far your friendly help, which I will overpay and pay again when I have found it. The Count woos your daughter, lays down his wanton siege before her beauty, and is resolved to seduce her. Let her finally say that she consents; we will direct her in the best way to do it."

"Right now his importunate blood will deny her nothing that she'll demand. The Count wears a ring that has passed downward in his house from son to son, some four or five generations since the first father wore it. This ring he values very richly, yet in his mad fire, to buy the means by which to satisfy his lust, this ring would not seem too dear to him to give up, however much he repents giving it up after he satisfies his lust."

"Now I see what you intend to do with your plan," the widow said.

"You see that it is lawful, then," Helena said. "It is no more than that your daughter, before she pretends to be won, desires this ring to be given to her. She will set up a place and a time where and when she is supposed to sleep with him. But she will allow me to sleep with him while she herself is most chastely absent. After this is done, to her dowry I'll add three thousand crowns to what has passed to you already."

“I have yielded,” the widow said. “I will do it. Give my daughter instructions for how she shall proceed so that the time and place for this very lawful deceit may prove fitting and agreeable. Every night he comes with musicians of all sorts and songs composed to seduce her. From our eaves we command him to go away, but he persists as if his life depends on it.”

“Why then tonight let us put our plot in motion,” Helena said. “If it succeeds, it is a wicked meaning in a lawful deed and a lawful meaning in a lawful act, where both do not sin, and yet it is a sinful fact.”

If Helena slept with her husband, they would not be doing a sinful act because they were married. However, Helena had to do a sinful act — deceive her husband — in order to get her husband to sleep with her. In addition, her husband, although he was not in fact committing adultery, thought that he was sleeping with a woman who was not his wife. Despite the deceit committed, or thought to be committed, they were still doing a lawful act.

Helena then said to the widow, “But let’s go about setting this plot in motion.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Outside the Florentine military camp, the second French lord and five or six soldiers waited to ambush Parolles.

The second French lord said, “He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner. When you burst out of hiding upon him, speak whatever terrible language you will. Although you don’t understand it yourselves, it doesn’t matter, for we must not seem to understand him unless we have someone among us whom we produce to be an interpreter.”

The first soldier said, “Good Captain, let me be the interpreter.”

“Aren’t you acquainted with him?” the second lord asked. “Does he know your voice?”

“No, sir, I promise you,” the first soldier replied.

The second lord asked, “But what linsey-woolsey will you reply to us?”

Literally, linsey-woolsey is cloth made of linen and wool. Figuratively, it is a mishmash of language.

“Even such as you speak to me,” the first soldier replied.

The second lord said, “Parolles must think that we are some band of foreign soldiers in the enemy’s payroll. Be aware that he has a smack of all neighboring languages; therefore, we must everyone be a man of his own fancy and not know what we speak one to another — as long as we seem to know what we speak to each other, we will know enough for our purpose. The language of jackdaws is gabble enough and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very intelligent. But crouch and lie in ambush! Here he comes, to pass two hours in a nap, and then to return and swear to the lies he invents.”

Parolles walked onto the scene, unaware that soldiers were crouching in ambush.

“Ten o’clock,” he said. “After no longer than three hours, it will be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible lie that carries it off. They begin to smoke me out and expose me, and disgraces have recently knocked too often at my door. I find that my tongue is too foolhardy, but my heart has the fear of Mars and of his creatures before it, not daring to do the reports of my tongue. I don’t dare do what my tongue says I will do.”

The second lord said quietly so that Parolles could not hear him, “This is the first truth that your own tongue was ever guilty of.”

“What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such intention?” Parolles said. “I must give myself some wounds, and say I got them in the exploit of recovering the drum, yet slight wounds will not carry it off. They will say, ‘Did you come away with such slight wounds?’ And great wounds I dare not give myself. Wherefore, what’s the physical evidence I can show them? Tongue, I must put you into a dairy woman’s mouth and buy myself another tongue from Bajazet’s mule, if you prattle me into these perils.”

Dairy women were known for being talkative.

Bajazet was a character in a Turkish history who rode a mule. Why would Parolles want to buy a tongue from a Turkish mule? It would be better for him to have a tongue that cannot speak any human language than to have a tongue that continually got him into trouble. When it comes to human language, mules are mutes, and Turkish mutes are slaves who are forced to remain mute because their tongues have been cut out. It would be better for Parolles to have no tongue — or a tongue that has been cut out — than to have a tongue that continually got him into trouble.

The second lord said, “Is it possible he should know what he is, and still be what he is? Wouldn’t he try to change and become better?”

Parolles said, “I wish the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword. I need to produce some evidence intended to show that I have been fighting.”

“We won’t let you off so easily,” the second lord said.

Parolles said, “Or I could shave my beard, and then say I did it as part of a stratagem.”

“It would not work,” the second lord said.

“Or I could drown my clothes in a stream or river, and say I was stripped,” Parolles said.

“That would hardly serve,” the second lord said.

“Suppose I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel,” Parolles said.

“How high would the window be?” the second lord said to himself.

“Thirty fathoms,” Parolles said, thinking out loud to himself. “One hundred and eighty feet.”

“Three great oaths would scarcely make that be believed,” the second lord said.

“I wish I had any drum of the enemy’s,” Parolles said. “I would swear I recovered it.”

“You shall hear one soon,” the second lord said.

“A drum now of the enemy’s —” Parolles mused.

A drum sounded, and the soldiers ambushed Parolles.

The second lord began to speak nonsense: “*Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.*”

The other soldiers replied with more nonsense: “*Cargo, cargo, cargo, villiando par corbo, cargo.*”

“*Cargo*” is Spanish for “charge.”

The soldiers seized him.

“Oh, ransom me, ransom me!” Parolles cried.

He wanted to be held for ransom rather than killed.

The soldiers blindfolded him, and he cried, “Do not cover my eyes.”

The first soldier said, "*Boskos thromuldo boskos.*"

Parolles said, "I know you are the Muscovites' regiment, and I shall lose my life for lack of knowing your language. If there be anyone here who is German, or Dane, low Dutch, Italian, or French, let him speak to me. I'll reveal information that shall lead to the defeat and ruin of the Duke of Florence."

"*Boskos vauvado,*" the first soldier said. "I understand you, and I can speak your tongue. *Kerely bonto,* sir, betake yourself to your faith and say your prayers, for seventeen daggers are at your bosom."

"Oh!" Parolles cried.

"Oh, pray, pray, pray!" the first soldier said. "*Manka revania dulce.*"

"*Revania*" is Hungarian for "screeching," and "*dulce*" is Latin for "sweet."

The second lord said loudly, "*Oscorbidulchos volivorco.*"

"The general is content to spare you yet," the first soldier said. "And, blindfolded as you are, he will lead you on to gather information from you. Perhaps you may give him information that will save your life."

"Oh, let me live!" Parolles cried. "And all the secrets of our military camp I'll reveal: the strength of their force and their plans. I'll speak wonders."

"But will you do so truly and faithfully?" the first soldier asked.

"If I do not, damn me," Parolles said.

"*Acordo linta,*" the first soldier said. "Come on; you are granted a space of time to live."

"*Linta*" is Portugese for "agreement."

Some soldiers took Parolles away.

The second lord said, "Go, tell the Count Rousillon and my brother that we have caught the woodcock, and we will keep him muffled and quiet until we hear from them."

A woodcock is an easily captured bird that was thought to be stupid.

The second soldier replied, "Captain, I will."

The second lord said, "Parolles will betray us all unto ourselves. He will tell us everything although he thinks that we are the enemy. Inform the Count Rousillon and my brother about that."

"I will do so, sir," the second soldier replied.

"Until then I'll keep him in the dark and safely locked up," the second lord said.

— 4.2 —

Bertram and Diana talked together in the widow's house.

Bertram said, "They told me that your name was Fontibell."

“No, my good lord, my name is Diana.”

Bertram wasn't much of a lover: He couldn't even remember her name. Of course, he had heard that her name was Diana, but in trying to remember it, the image of a fountain with a statue of Diana came to mind, and he mistakenly thought that her name was “Fontibell,” a name that means “Beautiful Fountain.”

“You are named after a goddess,” Bertram said, “and you are worthy of your name, with additional titles! But, fair soul, in your fine frame does love have no position? If the quick fire of youth does not light up your mind, you are no maiden, but a monument — a tomb. When you are dead, you will be such a one as you are now, for you are cold and stern, and now you should be as your mother was when your sweet self was begotten.”

“When I was begotten, my mother was chaste and did not engage in illicit sex,” Diana said. “She was married.”

“So should you be,” Bertram said.

False promises of marriage are part of the arsenal of the seducer.

“No,” Diana said. “My mother did but such duty as, my lord, you owe to your wife.”

“Speak no more of that,” Bertram said. “I ask you, do not strive against my vows. Do not resist me because of my marriage vows. I was compelled to marry her, but I love you by love's own sweet constraint, and I will forever do you all rights of service.”

“Yes, you men serve us women until we sexually serve you,” Diana said, “but when you have our roses — our maidenheads — you barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves with regret and you mock our bareness.”

“How I have sworn that I will serve you!” Bertram said.

“It is not the many oaths that make the truth,” Diana said, “but the plain single vow that is vowed truly. The number of oaths is not important; what is important is whether the oath is sworn morally and with sincerity. What is not holy, that we swear not by, but instead we take the Highest to witness our oath. So then, please, tell me, if I should swear by God's great attributes that I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths when I did love you ill — when my love for you is ill?”

Bertram's “love” for Diana was ill; he wanted to seduce her and then abandon her.

Diana continued, “To swear by him whom I profess to love, and yet to work against him and make him sin by committing adultery has no logic. Therefore, your oaths are mere words and a poor contract that lacks the seal that would make it legally binding, at least in my opinion.”

“Change it! Change your opinion!” Bertram urged. “Be not so holy-cruel — so cruel by being holy! Love is holy, and my integrity never knew the crafty plots that you charge men with engaging in. Stand off no more, but give yourself to my lovesick desires, which then will recover. Say that you are mine, and my love as it begins shall ever so persevere.”

Diana said, “I see that men make ropes in such a scarre so that we'll forsake ourselves.”

This may sound like nonsense, but that is because she was using obsolete words. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a rope is “[o]utcry, clamour; cries of distress or lamentation.”

Also according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “scarre” can be a spelling of “scare,” which can mean “[f]ear, dread.” By the way, the Norwegian verb “*rope*” means “shout, scream, call.”

Therefore, this is what Diana was saying: “I see that men make cries of distress when they are afraid they won’t get what they want so that we women will forsake ourselves.” In other words, men will say anything to get immoral sex.

She then pointed to a ring on Bertram’s hand and said, “Give me that ring.”

“I’ll lend it to you, my dear,” Bertram said, “but I have no power to give it to you.”

“Won’t you give it to me, my lord?” Diana asked.

“It is an honor — an heirloom — belonging to our house, bequeathed down from many ancestors,” Bertram said. “It would be the greatest disgrace in the world for me to lose its possession.”

“My honor’s such a ring as that,” Diana said. “My chastity’s the jewel of our house, bequeathed down from many ancestors; it would be the greatest disgrace in the world for me to lose my chastity. Thus your own proper wisdom brings in the champion Honor on my side, against your vain assault on my chastity.”

“Here, take my ring,” Bertram said, giving her the ring. “May my house, my honor, and indeed, my life be yours, and I’ll be commanded by you.”

“When midnight comes, knock at my bedchamber-window,” Diana said. “I’ll arrange things so that my mother shall not hear. Now I will charge you in the bond of truth, when you have conquered my yet maiden bed, to remain there only an hour and do not speak to me. My reasons are very strong; and you shall know them when this ring shall be delivered back to you again. And on your finger in the night I’ll put another ring, so that what in time proceeds may betoken to the future our past deeds.”

In the marriage ceremony, the man and the woman exchange rings. Helena, of course, would be the woman in bed with Bertram, who could remain only an hour with her and not talk to her because Helena did not want to be recognized by the sound of her voice or to be seen in the morning light. She did, however, want to spend some time with Bertram after sex.

Diana said, “Adieu, until then; then, don’t fail to appear. You have won a wife of me, although there my hope is done. Once I give up my virginity in this manner, I also give up my hope of ever becoming a wife.”

In fact, Bertram would win a wife — Helena — from Diana.

Bertram said, “A heaven on earth I have won by wooing you.”

He exited.

Diana said, “For which live long to thank both Heaven and me!”

Their ideas of heaven/Heaven were different.

Diana continued, “You may do so in the end. My mother told me just how he would woo, as if she sat in his heart; she says all men have the same oaths. He has sworn to marry me when his wife’s dead; therefore, I’ll lie with him when I am buried. Since Frenchmen weave plots as if

they were weaving a braid, let those marry who will — I intend to live and die a maiden. But I think it no sin to deceive and cozen and cheat him who would unjustly win.”

— 4.3 —

The two French lords spoke together in the Florentine camp. Some soldiers were present.

The first lord said, “You have not given Bertram his mother’s letter?”

“I delivered it an hour ago,” the second lord said. “There is something in it that stings his nature, for as he read it he changed almost into another man.”

“He is very much worthy of the blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady,” the first lord said. “He rejected his wife, who is a good woman.”

“He especially has incurred the everlasting displeasure of the King, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him,” the second lord said. “The King would have made him a very wealthy and much-respected man. I will tell you something about Bertram, but you must let it dwell darkly with you. Don’t tell anyone.”

“When you have spoken it, it is dead, and I am its grave,” the first lord said.

“Bertram has perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste reputation, and this night he fleshes his sexual desire in the spoil of her honor,” the second lord said. “He has given her his ancestral ring, which is an heirloom, and he thinks himself a made man in the unchaste arrangement.”

The second lord was using a hunting term when he used the word “fleshes.” When a dog makes a kill while hunting, it is rewarded with a piece of the flesh of the kill.

“Now, may God delay our rebellion!” the first lord said. “All of us sin and rebel against God, but let us fight temptation and put off sinning as long as possible. As we are ourselves — that is, without the benefit of the grace of God — what things are we!”

“We are entirely our own traitors,” the second lord said. “We are traitors to the person whom we ought to be. And as in the common course of all treasons, we always see the traitors reveal themselves with boasting conversation until they attain their abhorred aims, with the result that he who in this action plots against his own nobility in his proper stream overflows and destroys himself. That is, he who plots against his own nobility will succeed and will undo his own nobility with his own plots. His nobility ought to stay in its own proper course, but by giving in to his evil impulses the man destroys himself as if he has been caught in an overflowing flood.”

The first lord said, “Isn’t it a sign of damnation in us to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents? Bertram has been boasting about corrupting a chaste and virtuous maiden. Shall we not then have his company tonight?”

“Not until after midnight,” the second lord said, “for his schedule is full until that hour.”

“Midnight approaches quickly,” the first lord said. “I would gladly have him see his companion — Parolles — dissected, so that he might take a measure of his own judgments, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit. Bertram is wrong in his opinion of Parolles; if he can realize that, he may realize that he is wrong in his opinion of his wife. Up until now,

Bertram has treated Parolles as if he were a precious jewel, but we know that Parolles is a counterfeit gem that has until now been put in an elaborate setting.”

“We will not meddle with Parolles until Bertram comes,” the second lord said, “for the presence of the one must be the whip of the other.”

Both Parolles and Bertram will be the whip of the other. Parolles will be exposed as a coward in the presence of Bertram, but Bertram will realize his mistaken judgment of Parolles in the presence of Parolles.

“In the meantime, what do you hear about these wars?” the first lord asked.

“I hear there is an overture of peace,” the second lord said.

“I assure you, a peace has been reached,” the first lord said.

“What will Count Rousillon do then?” the second lord asked. “Will he travel further, or will he return again to France?”

“I perceive, by this question,” the first lord said, “that you are not altogether of his council. You do not give him counsel.”

“Let it be forbid, sir,” the second lord said. “If that were true, I would be a great deal responsible for his act — this seduction, which, we know, is unethical.”

“Sir, his wife some two months ago fled from his house,” the first lord said. “Her intention was a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand, which holy undertaking with most austere sanctity she accomplished, and while she resided there the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief. In the end, she made a groan with her last breath, and now she sings in Heaven. She died.”

“How is this known to be true?” the second lord asked.

“The stronger, more convincing evidence of its truth is by her own letters, which shows her story to be true, even to the point of her death,” the first lord said. “Her death itself, which she herself could not say had come, was faithfully and truly confirmed by the rector of the place.”

“Does Count Rousillon have all this information?” the second lord asked.

“Yes,” the first lord said, “and he has the particular confirmations, point from point and in every detail confirmed, to the full substantiation of the truth.”

“I am heartily sorry that he’ll be glad of this,” the second lord said.

“How mightily sometimes we make for ourselves comforts of our losses!” the first lord said.

“And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears!” the second lord said. “The great dignity and respect that his valor has here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.”

“The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together,” the first lord said. “Our virtues would cause us to be proud, if our sins did not whip us, and our sins would cause us to despair, if we did not cherish our virtues.”

A servant entered the room.

The first lord asked, "Where's Bertram, your master?"

"He met the Duke of Florence in the street, sir, from whom he has taken a solemn leave," the servant replied. "His lordship will leave tomorrow morning for France. The Duke of Florence has offered him letters praising him to the King of France."

"They shall be no more than is needful there, even if they were more than they can commend," the second lord said.

"They cannot be too sweet for the King's tartness," the second lord said.

The King of France was angry at Bertram because of Bertram's poor treatment of Helena, and so Bertram needed the very highest commendations he could get.

He looked up and said, "Here's his lordship now."

Bertram entered the room.

"How are you now, my lord!" the second lord said. "Isn't it after midnight?"

"I have this night dispatched sixteen pieces of business, which could each have taken a month to sort out. Here's a list of the pieces of business that I have undertaken with success in succession: I have taken ceremonious leave of the Duke of Florence, said my adieus to those nearest him, buried a wife, mourned for her, wrote to my mother that I am returning to France, hired my means of transportation home, and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer and more trivial pieces of business; the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet."

The last piece of business was sleeping with "Diana," as he supposed, but that was not finished because she could become pregnant, and/or she could insist that she become his wife, as he had promised her he would when his first wife had died.

The second lord said, "If the business be of any difficulty, and in the morning you will depart from hence, it requires haste from your lordship."

"I mean, the business has not ended because I am afraid that I will hear of it hereafter," Bertram said. "But shall we have this dialogue between the fool and the soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit, false image of a soldier; he has deceived me, like a double-meaning, equivocating prophet."

Some prophets use equivocation in their answers to questions. Croesus, King of Lydia, wanted to attack Persia, but first he went to the Oracle of Delphi and asked the Oracle what would happen if he attacked the mighty Kingdom of Persia. The Oracle replied, "A mighty Kingdom will fall." Lydia attacked Persia, and a mighty Kingdom did fall: the mighty Kingdom of Lydia.

"Bring Parolles forth," the second lord said. "He has sat in the stocks all night, poor gallant knave."

A person sitting in the stocks has his legs (and/or arms and/or head) restrained. The word "gallant" in this context meant "fancily dressed."

Bertram said, "It does not matter. His heels have deserved it because they have usurped his spurs for so long."

Parolles' heels ran away from battle, usurping his spurs, which ought to be used to spur his horse to go into battle. "Usurping his spurs" also meant that Parolles had falsely claimed to have knightly valor.

Bertram then asked, "How does Parolles carry himself?"

By "carry himself," Bertram meant "comport himself," aka "conduct himself."

"I have told your lordship already, the stocks carry him," the second lord said. "They carry his weight. But to answer you as you would be understood, he weeps like a wench who has spilled her milk. He has confessed his sins to Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time he first remembers anything from his life to this very immediate disaster of his being set in the stocks, and what do you think he has confessed?"

"He has confessed nothing about me, has he?" Bertram asked.

"His confession is taken and written down, and it shall be read to his face," the second lord said. "If your lordship is in it, as I believe you are, you must be patient until you can hear it."

Parolles, blindfolded and guarded by the first soldier, walked to a place close to them.

"A plague upon him!" Bertram said. "Blindfolded! He can say nothing about me."

"Hush! Hush!" the first lord said. "Hoodman comes!"

They spoke quietly enough that Parolles could not hear them.

Hoodman was the blindfolded player in the game hoodman blind, aka blindman's buff or blindman's bluff. The word "buff" at one time meant "small push."

The first lord then began speaking nonsense: "*Portotartarosa*."

The nonsense word included the word "Tartar"; in this society, Tartars were known for being savage. "*Porto*" is Latin for "I carry."

The first soldier said to Parolles, "He calls for the tortures. What will you tell us without your being tortured?"

"I will confess everything I know without constraint," Parolles said. "If you pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more."

A pasty is a small pastry with its crust pinched together so that the filling, often meat and vegetables, is inside. One meaning of "pinch" is "inflict bodily pain."

"*Bosko chimurcho*," the first soldier said.

"*Bosko*" is Polish for "divinely."

"*Boblibindo chicurmurco*," the first lord said.

"You are a merciful general," the first soldier said. "Our general orders you to answer what I shall ask you out of a list of questions."

"And I will answer with the truth, as I hope to live," Parolles said.

The first soldier read out loud, "*First demand of him how many horsemen the Duke of Florence has.*"

He asked Parolles, "What do you say to that?"

Parolles answered, "Five or six thousand, but they are very weak and unserviceable. The troops are all scattered, and the commanders are very poor rogues, I swear upon my reputation and credit and as I hope to live."

"Shall I set down your answer so?" the first soldier asked.

"Do," Parolles said. "I'll take the sacrament on it, how and in which way you will."

Some people disagreed on how to take the sacrament, whether while sitting or while kneeling.

"All's one to him — he doesn't care," Bertram said. "What a past-saving — damned to Hell — slave this man is!"

"You're deceived, my lord," the first lord said ironically. "This is Monsieur Parolles, the expert in military affairs, aka gallant militarist — that was his own phrase — who had the whole theory of war in the knot of his sash, and the practice in the chape — the metal plate where the dagger-point goes — of the sheath of his dagger. He understands both the theory and the practice of war."

A lady who favored him would knot his sash, and the chape would be of use when the dagger is not in use.

The second lord said, "I will never trust a man again because he keeps his sword clean and polished, nor will I believe he can have everything in him because he wears his apparel neatly and elegantly."

"Well, that's set down," the first soldier said.

"Five or six thousand horsemen, I said — I will say the truth — or thereabouts," Parolles said. "Set it down, for I'll speak the truth."

"He's very near the truth in this," the first lord said.

"But I will not learn words to give him thanks for it, considering the reason he delivers the truth," Bertram said.

"They are poor rogues," Parolles said. "Please, set that down in writing."

"Well, that's set down," the first soldier said.

"I humbly thank you, sir," Parolles said. "The truth's a truth: The rogues are marvelously poor."

The first soldier read out loud, "*Demand of him, of what strength they are in foot soldiers.*"

He then asked Parolles, "What do you say to that?"

Parolles replied, "Truly, sir, if I were to live only until this present hour, I will tell the truth. Let me see. Spurio has a hundred and fifty foot soldiers. Sebastian has the same number. Corambus has the same number. Jaques has the same number. Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii

have two hundred and fifty foot soldiers each. My own company, as well as the companies of Chitopher, Vaumond, and Bentii have two hundred and fifty each. So the official list of men, both the rotten men and the sound men, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand heads, half of whom dare not shake snow from off their military cloaks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.”

Bertram asked, “What shall be done to Parolles?”

“Nothing, but let him have thanks,” the first lord replied.

Presumably, Parolles would not welcome the kind of “thanks” he would receive.

The first lord added, “Ask him about my character, and what credit I have with the Duke of Florence.”

The first soldier said to Parolles, “Well, that’s set down.”

He then read out loud, “*You shall ask him whether one Captain Dumain, a Frenchman, is in the camp; what is his reputation with the Duke; what is his valor, honesty, and expertness in wars; and you shall ask him whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt Captain Dumain to revolt.*”

“Well-weighing sums of gold” are “heavy amounts of gold” and “influential amounts of gold.”

The first soldier asked Parolles, “What do you say about this? What do you know about it?”

“I beg you,” Parolles said, “to let me answer each particular question. Ask me each question one at a time.”

“Do you know this Captain Dumain?” the first soldier asked.

“I know him,” Parolles said. “He was a patcher’s apprentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the sheriff’s fool pregnant — she was a dumb innocent who could not tell him no.”

A patcher is either a cobbler who mends shoes or a tailor who mends clothing.

The sheriff would have custody of feebleminded citizens whose estates were worth little. The King would have custody of feebleminded citizens whose estates were worth much.

Captain Dumain was angry and made a motion as if he were going to attack Parolles.

Bertram said to the first lord, who was Captain Dumain, “Please, don’t do anything. Restrain your anger and keep your hands away from Parolles, although I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls. He is sure to meet with an ‘accident’ that will take his life.”

The first soldier asked, “Well, is this Captain in the Duke of Florence’s camp?”

“Upon my knowledge, he is, and he is lousy,” Parolles said.

The word “lousy” was both an insult and literally meant. Military camps were full of lice.

Bertram looked at the first lord and stifled a laugh.

The first lord said to Bertram, “Don’t look that way at me; we shall hear about your lordship soon.”

The first soldier asked, "What is Captain Dumain's reputation with the Duke of Florence?"

"The Duke knows him for no other than a poor officer of mine," Parolles said, "and he wrote to me this other day to kick him out of the band of soldiers. I think I have his letter in my pocket."

"By mother Mary, we'll search your pocket for it," the first soldier said.

"In all seriousness, I do not know that it is in my pocket," Parolles said. "Either it is there, or it is in a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent."

"Here it is," the first soldier said. "Here's a paper. Shall I read it to you?"

"I don't know whether it is the Duke's letter or not," Parolles said.

"Our interpreter does his job well," Bertram said.

"Excellently," the first lord agreed.

The first soldier read out loud, "*Diana, the Count's a fool, and wealthy with gold —.*"

Parolles interrupted, "That is not the Duke's letter, sir; that is a warning to a proper maid in Florence, one named Diana, to take heed of the allurements of Bertram, Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish — he is very horny. Please, sir, put away the letter."

"No, I'll read it first," the first soldier said, "if you don't mind."

"My intention in writing the letter, I say, was very honest in behalf of the maid," Parolles said, "for I knew the young Count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds."

When it came to virgins, Bertram, according to Parolles, was like a whale feeding on large numbers of small fish.

Bertram said, "Damnably both-sides rogue! He pretends to be a friend, but he is not a friend."

The first soldier read the letter out loud:

*"When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it;*

*"After he scores, he never pays the score.*

*"Half won is match well made; match, and well make it.*

*"He never pays after-debts, take it before.*

*"And say that a soldier, Diana, told you this:*

*"Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss.*

*"You can count on this, the Count's a fool, I know it,*

*"Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.*

*"I am yours, as he vowed to you in your ear,*

*“PAROLLES.”*

His advice to Diana was to receive payment in advance for what Bertram would take away from her. Indeed, according to Parolles, the only way to get money from Bertram, who was happy to get things on credit and then never pay, was to make him pay in advance. In other words, Parolles was advising Diana, more or less, to sell her virginity. Why less? Because he — Parolles — would like her to give away her virginity to him, something he hinted at when he wrote that men are to mell — have sex — with, while boys are not worth kissing. The implication was that Bertram was a boy, while Parolles was a man. But overall, Parolles regarded sex as a woman’s sellable commodity.

“Half won is match well made; match, and well make it” referred to a sexual match between Bertram and Diana. Parolles was saying this: When a match is well made, with all conditions agreed to, it is a match that is half won; therefore, continue to make the match and to make it good. In other words, Parolles wanted Diana to sell her virginity, but to get a good price for it.

Bertram said, “Parolles shall be whipped through the army with this rhyming poem written on his forehead.”

The second lord said ironically, “This is your devoted friend, sir, the multiple linguist and the armipotent — mighty in arms — soldier.”

“I could endure anything before but a cat, and now he’s a cat to me,” Bertram said.

The first soldier said, “I perceive, sir, by the General’s looks, we shall be obliged to hang you.”

“Give me my life, sir, in any case,” Parolles pleaded. “It is not that I am afraid to die, but that, because my sins are so many, I would like to spend the remainder of my natural life in repentance. Let me live, sir, in a dungeon, in the stocks, or anywhere, as long as I may live.”

“We’ll see what may be done,” the first soldier said, “as long as you confess freely; therefore, once more let’s talk about this Captain Dumain. You have answered the question about his reputation with the Duke and about his valor. Now answer this question: How honest is he?”

“He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister,” Parolles replied. “As for rapes and ravishments, he parallels Nessus, the Centaur who attempted to rape the wife of Hercules. He does not believe in keeping his oaths; when it comes to breaking them, he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie, sir, with such volubility and fluency that you would think truth were a fool. Drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bedclothes; but his servants know his habit of peeing the bed and so they lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, about his honesty. He has everything that an honest man should not have; of what an honest man should have, he has nothing.”

Impressed by Parolles’ over-the-top villainy, the first lord said, “I begin to love him for this.”

“For this description of your honesty?” Bertram said. “I say a pox upon him! To me, he’s more and more a cat.”

The first soldier asked Parolles, “What do you have to say about his expertness in war?”

“Truly, sir,” Parolles said. “He has led the drum before the English tragedians.”

English acting troupes used to advertise an upcoming play by parading behind a drum. Parolles was saying that Captain Dumain's experience with drums was not with military drums, but with actors' drums.

Parolles continued, "To tell lies about him, I will not, and more of his soldiership I don't know, except, in that country — England — he had the honor to be the officer at a place there called Mile End, to instruct for the doubling of files. I would do the man what honor I can, but of this — his service at Mile End — I am not certain."

The citizen militia of London used to train at Mile End Green, where they engaged in such military drills as the doubling of files. This was not a professional militia, and it was mocked for its amateurishness.

The first lord said, "He has out-villained villainy so far that the rarity redeems him. His villainy is so excessive that it is entertaining rather than simply despicable."

Bertram said, "I say a pox on him; he's still a cat."

The first lord was right: Parolles' insults were inventive and entertaining; in comparison, Bertram's insults were repetitive and boring.

The first soldier said to Parolles, "His qualities being at this poor price, I need not ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt."

Parolles replied, "Sir, for a small French coin he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it, and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually."

In other words, for a small French coin he would sell his eternal salvation, ensure that his immediate descendants would not inherit it, and furthermore ensure that *all* his descendants would not possess it.

"What kind of man is his brother, the other Captain Dumain?" the first soldier asked.

The second lord, who was the other Captain Dumain, asked, "Why does he ask him about me?"

"What kind of man is he?" the first soldier repeated.

"He is even a crow of the same nest," Parolles replied. "He is not altogether as great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil. He excels his brother as a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best cowards who exists. In a retreat he outruns any lackey who runs alongside his master's carriage; in contrast, when he is supposed to march forward to meet the enemy, his legs cramp."

The first soldier asked, "If your life is saved, will you undertake to betray the Duke of Florence?"

"Yes, and also the Captain of his cavalry, Count Rousillon," Parolles replied.

"I'll confer quietly with the General, and find out what he wants to do," the first soldier said.

Parolles said quietly to himself, "I'll have no more of military drumming — a plague on all military drums! I have run into this danger only because I wanted to seem to deserve well, and

to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy, the Count Rousillon. Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was captured?"

"There is no remedy, sir," the first soldier said. "You must die, the General says, you who have so traitorously revealed the secrets of your army and made such pestiferous reports of men with very noble reputations. You can serve the world for no honest use; therefore, you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head."

"Oh, Lord, sir! Let me live, or let me see my death!" Parolles pleaded. "At least, take off my blindfold."

The first lord said, "You shall have your blindfold taken off, and you shall take your leave of all your friends."

The first lord removed Parolles' blindfold and then asked him, "So, look around you. Do you know anybody here?"

"Good morning, noble Captain," Bertram said.

"God bless you, Captain Parolles," the second lord said.

"May God save you, noble Captain," the first lord said.

The second lord asked, "Captain, what greeting will you send to my Lord Lafeu? I am going to France and can take him your greeting."

The first lord asked, "Good Captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you wrote to Diana on behalf of the Count Rousillon? If I were not a complete coward, I would compel you to give it to me, but fare you well."

Bertram and the lords exited.

The first soldier said to Parolles, "You are ruined. You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that still has a knot in it."

"Who cannot be crushed by a plot?" Parolles said.

The first soldier said, "If you could find a country where there were only women who had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent, shameless nation. Fare you well, sir; I am going to France, too. We shall speak about you there."

The first soldier exited with the other soldiers.

Alone, Parolles said to himself, "Still I am thankful. If my heart were great, it would burst with shame at this. Captain I'll be no more, but I will eat and drink, and sleep as softly and gently as any Captain shall. Simply being the base thing I am shall make me live. That man who knows that he is a braggart, let him fear this, for it will come to pass that every braggart shall be found to be an ass. Rust, sword! Cool, blushes! And, Parolles, live safest in shame! Since you have been fooled, by Foolery thrive! There's a position and a means to live for every man alive."

If Parolles were a better man, he would die from shame. But he was not a better man, and he knew it, so he resolved to live and to eat, drink, and sleep well. Since he had been made a fool of, why not make a living by being a Fool?

Parolles did not know it, but the first lord had found his foolishness entertaining; others would as well.

Parolles then said before exiting, "I'll go after them."

— 4.4 —

Helena, the widow, and Diana spoke together in a room in the widow's house in Florence.

Helena said to the others, "That you may well perceive I have not wronged you, one of the greatest in the Christian world — the King of France — shall be my surety, aka guarantor, before whose throne it is needful, before I can fully accomplish my goals, to kneel.

"Previously, I did for him a desirable task, as dear almost as his life. Gratitude for this task would peep forth through the flinty bosom of a Tartar, one of a people not known in our society for gratitude, and would respond with thanks.

"I duly am informed that his grace the King is at Marseilles, to which place we have convenient and appropriate means of transportation. You must know that I am thought to be dead. Now that the army is disbanding, my husband is hurrying home, where with Heaven's aid and with the permission of my good lord the King, we'll be before we are expected."

The widow said, "Gentle madam, you have never had a servant to whose trust your business was more welcome. I am glad that you are able to confide in me."

Helena replied, "Nor have you, mistress, ever had a friend whose thoughts more truly labor to recompense your love and friendship. Doubt not that Heaven brought me up to provide your daughter's dowry for a good marriage, and doubt not that Heaven fated your daughter to be my motive — my means of causing my husband to act in a certain way — and helper to a husband.

"But, oh, strange men! They can make such sweet use of what they hate, when lecherous trusting of the deceived thoughts defiles the pitch-black night, and so lust plays with what it loathes — me, Helena — in place of that which is away and not present — Diana. His lust made him enjoy me, whom he hates.

"Bertram's lust that he trusted was deceived, and defiled the pitch-black night and made it even darker with his attempt to commit adultery, which he believed that he had committed although actually he slept with me and not with Diana.

"But let's talk further about this later.

"You, Diana, under my poor instructions yet must suffer to some extent on my behalf."

Diana replied, "As long as it is an honest, chaste death that goes with your impositions, I am willing to suffer death at your command."

Helena said, "Yet, I tell you this: With merely the word the time will bring on a metaphorical summer, when briars shall have leaves as well as thorns, and be as sweet as sharp."

"The word" is Bertram saying "yes" to his marriage vows — and meaning it. Once Bertram truly commits to his marriage vows, all will be well.

Helena continued, "We must leave. Our wagon is prepared, and time invigorates us. All's well that ends well; always the end crowns the work."

The Latin “*finis coronat opus*” means “the end crowns the work.”

Helena continued, “Whatever the course, the end is the renown. Whatever occurs to get us there, the conclusion determines the praise.”

— 4.5 —

The Countess, Lafeu, and the Fool spoke together in a room in the Count of Rousillon’s palace. They were talking about Bertram and Parolles.

Lafeu said to the Countess, “No, no, no, your son was misled by a snipped-taffeta fellow there, whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughy — raw — youth of a nation in his color.”

A fashion of the time was to wear two sets of sleeves of different colors. The set of sleeves on the outside was made of taffeta and had cuts in them in order to reveal the color of the set of sleeves underneath. Parolles wore such fashionable clothing, some of which was saffron-colored, and Lafeu was saying that Parolles’ influence on inexperienced young men would make them that color — saffron, aka yellow, symbolic color of cowardice.

Lafeu continued, “If not for Parolles, your daughter-in-law would have been alive at this hour, and your son would still be here at home, and more advanced in wealth and status by the King than by that red-tailed bumblebee I speak of.”

Parolles was the red-tailed buzzing bumblebee; he wore fancy clothing and made noise as he chattered.

The Countess said, “I wish I had never known him; it resulted in the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman whom nature ever had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother in childbirth, I could not have owed her a more-rooted love. I loved Helena.”

“She was a good lady,” Lafeu said. “She was a good lady. We may pick a thousand salads before we light on such another herb.”

The Fool said, “Indeed, sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace.”

The herb of grace is rue.

Lafeu said, “Marjoram and rue are knot-herbs. They are not for salads, you knave; they are nose-herbs. They are for smelling, not for eating.”

Flowers and sweet-smelling herbs were grown in intricately designed beds called knots.

The Fool replied, “I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in either grace or grass.”

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, fell out of the grace of God, went insane, and ate grass like an animal. His story is told in the Biblical Book of Daniel.

“Which do you profess yourself to be: a knave or a fool?” Lafeu asked.

The Fool replied, “A Fool, sir, at a woman’s service, and a knave at a man’s.”

“Why do you make this distinction?” Lafeu asked.

The Fool replied, “I would cheat the man of his wife and do his service.”

“So you would be a knave at his service, indeed,” Lafeu said.

“And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service,” the Fool said.

He was punning. To service an animal is to mate it. A literal Fool’s bauble is a scepter with the figure of a head on one end. The Fool was using the word “bauble” metaphorically to refer to his penis, which he would use to service a man’s wife.

Lafeu replied, “I will answer my question for you: You are both a knave and a Fool.”

“At your service,” the Fool said.

“No, no, no,” Lafeu said. The Fool already worked for the Countess. Lafeu liked the Countess, and he did not want to hire the Fool away from her.

“Why, sir, if I cannot serve you,” the Fool said, “I can serve as great a Prince as you are.”

“Who would that be?” Lafeu asked. “A Frenchman?”

“Truly, sir, he has an English name; but his fisnomy — physiognomy, aka facial features — is hotter in France than in England,” the Fool said.

“What Prince is that?” Lafeu asked.

“The Black Prince, sir,” the Fool said, “alias the Prince of Darkness, alias the Devil.”

Edward the Black Prince was the son of King Edward III of England. He was called the Black Prince because of his black armor. In 1346, on a French battlefield, he played the role of a hero as he and his soldiers defeated the entire French army in the Battle of Crécy. He is why the Black Prince had an English name.

What was the Black Prince’s French name? The Devil is associated with fire, as well as with blackness, and the French name “Lafeu” means “The Fire.” The Fool was joking that Lafeu had the facial features of the Devil.

Lafeu appreciated the joke; he tipped the Fool.

He said, “Wait, there’s some money for you. I am giving you this tip not to tempt you from your master you are talking about; continue to serve the Devil.”

The Fool then claimed to be heading toward Heaven.

He said, “I am a woodland fellow, sir, who has always loved a great fire; and the master I speak about always keeps a good fire. But surely he is the Prince of the World; let his nobility remain in his court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter. Some people who humble themselves may enter, but the many will be too sensitive to cold and too fond of comfort, and they’ll be for the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.”

“Go your ways and leave now,” Lafeu said. “I begin to be weary of you, and I tell you that before I do in fact get weary of you, because I would not fall out with you. Go on your way:

Let my horses be well looked after, without any tricks.”

Some unethical hostlers were reputed to grease the horse’s teeth with candlewax so that it could not eat many oats. Other hostlers were reputed to butter hay because horses will not eat buttered hay. That way, the hostler could charge horses’ owners over and over for the same bundle of hay.

“If I put any tricks upon them, sir, they shall be jades’ tricks,” the Fool replied, “which are their own right by the law of nature.”

Jades were ill-trained or bad horses, which had their own tricks. While being saddled by an inexperienced rider, a horse could fill its lungs with air. When the inexperienced rider attempted to climb onto the horse, the saddle would slide down to the horse’s belly.

The Fool exited.

Lafeu said, “The Fool is a shrewd and unhappy knave.”

Some people respond to their unhappy cynicism by creating humor; Lafeu thought that the Fool was one such person. Professional Fools create satire, and some satirists are unhappy cynics.

“So he is,” the Countess said. “My lord and husband who has gone to Heaven got much entertainment out of him. By my husband’s request and authority, the Fool remains here, and the Fool thinks my husband’s authority gives him carte blanche to be saucy and impertinent. Indeed, the Fool has no pace, but runs where he will.”

A trained horse keeps to a measured, steady pace, but the Fool was like a wild horse that ran wherever and however it wanted.

“I like him well,” Lafeu admitted. “His sauciness is not amiss. I take no offence to it.”

He added, “I was about to tell you that since I heard of the good lady’s death and that my lord your son was returning home, I urged the King my master to speak on behalf of my daughter. His majesty, without being prompted, remembered by himself that when they were children, he had first proposed that they be married.

“His highness has promised me that he will arrange the marriage, and there is no better way to stop the displeasure he has conceived against your son. This marriage will reconcile the King and your son.

“How does your ladyship like it? Do you approve of your son marrying my daughter?”

“I am very much content, my lord,” the Countess said, “and I wish it happily effected. I am happy for the marriage to take place.”

“His highness comes posthaste from Marseilles,” Lafeu said. “He is of as able body as when he was thirty years old. He will be here tomorrow, or I am deceived by a man who has seldom failed in gathering such information.”

“This news makes me rejoice,” the Countess said. “I have hoped that I shall see the King before I die. I have received letters telling me that my son will be here tonight. I ask your lordship to remain with me until my son and the King meet together.”

“Madam, I was just thinking about what manners I might use to properly ask to be invited into your home for this meeting,” Lafeu said.

“You need only plead the privilege that goes with your honored self,” the Countess said. “As the father of the woman who will marry my son, you may certainly stay here.”

“Lady, of that marriage I have made a bold charter, but I thank my God it holds yet,” Lafeu said. “I boldly took action to make the marriage happen, and I am happy that it will happen.”

The Fool returned and said, “Oh, madam, yonder’s my lord your son with a patch of velvet on his face. Whether there is a scar under it or not, the velvet knows, but it is a splendid patch of velvet. His left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.”

A velvet patch was used to cover a facial war wound. Velvet of two pile and a half was good-quality velvet.

Lafeu said, “A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery — visible sign — of honor, so most likely that is why he is wearing the velvet.”

The Fool said, “But it is your carbonadoed face.”

Meat that has been carbonadoed for cooking has had slits made in it. The Fool was still thinking of fire, but he was also thinking of a different reason for wearing a velvet patch. A person with syphilitic sores on his face would have the sores slashed so that the infection could drain.

Lafeu said to the Countess, “Let us go see your son, please. I long to talk with the young noble soldier.”

The Fool said, “Indeed, there’s a dozen of them, with delicate fine hats and very courteous feathers that bow their heads and nod at every man.”

## CHAPTER 5

— 5.1 —

Helena, the widow, and Diana, accompanied by two attendants, stood on a street in Marseilles.

Helena said, “But this exceedingly great haste as we journey day and night must be wearing your spirits low. We cannot help it, but since you have made the days and nights as one and are wearing out your gentle limbs in my affairs, be certain that you so grow in my recompense that nothing can unroot you. You will be rewarded — you can be confident of that.”

A gentleman walked down the street.

Seeing him, Helena said, “This is a good time to see a gentleman. This man may help me be heard by his majesty’s ear, if he would expend some effort on my behalf.”

She said to the gentleman, “May God save you, sir.”

“And you,” the gentleman replied.

“Sir, I have seen you in the court of the King of France,” Helena said.

“I have been there sometimes,” the gentleman replied.

“I do presume, sir, that you still have a reputation as a good man, and therefore, since I am goaded by many pressing reasons, which force me to put aside formal etiquette, I ask you for the use of your own virtues, for which I shall now and continue to be thankful to you.”

“What do you want me to do?” the gentleman asked.

“I hope that you will please give this poor petition to the King of France and aid me with that store of power you have to come into the King’s presence.”

“The King’s not here,” the gentleman said.

“Not here, sir!” Helena exclaimed.

“Not here, indeed,” the gentleman said. “He departed from here last night and with more haste than is his custom.”

“Lord, how we lose our pains!” the widow said.

Unruffled, Helena said, “All’s well that ends well yet, although time seems to us so adverse and our resources unfit.”

She asked the gentleman, “Please tell us where he has gone.”

“Indeed, as I understand it, he has gone to Rousillon, where I am going.”

“Please, sir,” Helena said, “since you are likely to see the King before I do, hand this paper to his gracious hand.”

She gave him a paper.

Helena continued, “Your doing this I presume shall render to you no blame but rather make you thank your pains for doing it. I will follow you with what good speed our resources will contrive for us.”

“I’ll do this for you,” the gentleman said.

“And you shall find yourself well thanked,” Helena said, “no matter what happens. We must start traveling again. Go, go, help us.”

— 5.2 —

The Fool and Parolles stood in front of the Count of Rousillon’s palace.

Parolles, whose fortunes had drastically declined, and whose clothing was much less clean than formerly, asked the Fool very politely, “Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this letter. I have before now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes, but I am now, sir, muddied because of Lady Fortune’s moody dislike of me, and I smell somewhat strongly of her strong displeasure.”

Parolles smelled as if he had fallen into a fishpond. In this society, garbage was thrown into ponds, where fish, including carp, were raised for food.

The Fool replied, “Truly, Lady Fortune’s displeasure is only sluttish, if it smells as strongly as you speak of it. I will henceforth eat no fish of Lady Fortune’s buttering. Please, stand downwind so that I don’t smell you.”

Fish were frequently buttered when served.

“You don’t need to hold your nose, sir,” Parolles said. “I was speaking metaphorically.”

“Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stinks, I will hold my nose,” the Fool said. “I would do that against any man’s stinking metaphor. Please, stand further away.”

Parolles requested, “Please, sir, deliver this paper to Lord Lafeu for me.”

“Bah! Please stand further away,” the Fool said. “You want me to give a paper from Lady Fortune’s toilet to a nobleman! Look, here he comes himself.”

Lafeu walked over to them.

The Fool said to him, “Here is a purr of Lady Fortune’s, sir, or of Lady Fortune’s cat — but not a musk-cat — who has fallen into the unclean fishpond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied because of this. Please, sir, treat the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my smiles of comfort and leave him to your lordship.”

In this society, the word “purr” means many things: 1) the purr of a cat, 2) the knave in a deck of cards used to play the game Post and Pair, and 3) animal manure.

Civit cats and musk deer were known for their glands that were used to make perfume. Parolles’ scent was nothing like the sweet-smelling scents of perfume.

Carp refers both to the fish and to a human chatterbox.

The Fool used “smiles of comfort” ironically. His smiles — jokes directed at Parolles’ misfortune — hardly comforted Parolles. However, the Fool did call Parolles ingenious, which is a compliment. Although Parolles was a scoundrel, his scurrility was so thorough going that other people marveled at it and had a kind of respect for him.

The Fool exited.

Parolles said to Lafeu, “My lord, I am a man whom Lady Fortune has cruelly scratched.”

“And what would you have me do about it?” Lafeu asked. “It is too late to pare her fingernails now. What have you done to play the knave with Lady Fortune, with the result being that she should scratch you? She in herself is a good lady and would not have knaves thrive long under her. There’s a quart d’ecu — a small coin — for you. Let the justices make you and Lady Fortune friends. I am busy.”

Some justices’ jobs were to take care of the poor.

Parolles said, “I beg your honor to hear me say one single word more.”

Lafeu said, “You are begging for a single penny more. Here, you shall have it. Don’t bother speaking your word.”

“My name, my good lord, is Parolles,” he said.

Lafeu said, “You beg more than one ‘word,’ then,” referring to Parolles’ name. In French, the word “*paroles*” meant “words.”

Looking closer at the bedraggled Parolles, and recognizing him, Lafeu said, “God’s passion! Give me your hand. How is your drum?”

He had heard all about Parolles’ adventure with the drum.

Parolles cried, “Oh, my good lord, you were the first who found me out and discovered what kind of a man I really am!”

“Was I, truly?” Lafeu said. “Then that means I was the first who lost you.”

“It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out,” Parolles said.

“Get out, knave!” Lafeu said. “Do you put upon me at once both the duty of God and the duty of the Devil? One brings you in grace and the other brings you out of grace.”

Trumpets sounded.

Lafeu said, “The King’s coming; I can tell by his trumpets. Sirrah, ask for me later. I had a conversation about you last night. Although you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat; come on, follow me.”

Parolles had fallen greatly in status, as shown by Lafeu calling him “sirrah.” But Lafeu would provide for him: Lafeu would keep Parolles fed in return for Parolles’ amusing him.

Parolles said, “I praise and thank God for you.”

The King of France, the Countess, Lafeu, the two French lords, and some attendants were in a room in the Count of Rousillon's palace.

Using the royal plural, the King said to the Countess, "We lost a jewel when we lost Helena and our own worth and value were made much poorer by it, but your son, as if he were insane in his foolishness, lacked the sense to fully know her worth and value."

"That is in the past, my liege," the Countess said, "and I beg your majesty to consider that it was done because of natural rebellion. It was done in the blaze of youth, when oil and fire, too strong for reason's force, overbears it and burns on."

"Oil" means "semen," while "fire" is sexual desire. The Countess wanted the King to believe that her son's passions had opposed his reason, and to not believe that her son had opposed the King. Actually, it was Bertram's pride that had caused him to reject Helena because of her low birth. If he had been ruled by passion, he would have slept with her. However, it should be noted that the Countess meant that her son had felt passion for a woman other than Helena.

"My honored lady," the King replied, "I have forgiven and forgotten all; although my revenges were high bent like an arrow in a fully bent bow, and I watched for the best time to shoot him."

"This I must say," Lafeu said, "but first I beg for pardon. The young lord did to his majesty, his mother, and his lady offence of mighty note, but he did to himself the greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife whose beauty astonished the survey of the most experienced eyes, whose words took all ears captive, whose dear perfection made hearts that scorned to serve others humbly serve her."

"Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear," the King said. "Well, call Bertram to come here. We and he are reconciled, and the first view of him shall kill all reopening of old wounds. Let him not ask for our pardon. The nature of his great offence is dead, and deeper than oblivion we bury its relics that would incense anger. We will not entertain any thoughts that arouse anger toward him. Let him approach me as if he were a stranger who had never offended me, and inform him that it is our will he should do this."

An attendant said, "I shall, my liege." He exited to carry out his errand.

The King asked Lafeu, "What does he say about your daughter? Have you spoken to him?"

"All that he is, is at the disposal of your highness," Lafeu replied.

"Then we shall have a match," the King said. "Bertram and your daughter will be married. I have letters that were sent to me that set him high in fame and reputation. He served well in war."

Bertram entered the room.

"He looks well after his experience in Italy," Lafeu said.

The King said, "I am not a day of a single season, for you may see a sunshine and a hail in me simultaneously, but to the brightest beams divided clouds give way, so come forward, Bertram. The time is fair again."

"For my faults, which I highly repent, dear sovereign, give pardon to me," Bertram said.

The King replied, "All is well and good. Say not one word more about the time that has passed by. Let's take the instant by the forelock, the way that we should seize Lady Fortune and opportunity, for we are old, and on our quickest decrees the inaudible and noiseless foot of Time steals before we can effect them. Do you remember the daughter of this lord: Lafeu?"

"Admiringly, my liege," Bertram said. "At first I struck my choice upon her, before my heart dared to make too bold a herald of my tongue."

Bertram was saying that he loved Lafeu's daughter first and wanted to marry her, but he was too shy to make his desire to marry her known.

He continued, this time speaking about Helena without mentioning her name, "The sight of Lafeu's daughter became implanted in my eyes, and contempt lent me a scornful perspective, which warped the line of every face other than the face of Lafeu's daughter and which scorned a fair color, or expressed that the fair color was stolen, and which extended or contracted all proportions to a most hideous object."

Bertram was saying that his love for Lafeu's daughter warped his perception of every other woman, including Helena, making him see Helena in a false light. The implication was that this caused him to reject marriage to Helena.

He continued talking about Helena: "Thence it came that she whom all men praised and whom I myself, since I have lost her, have loved, was in my eye the speck of dust that offended it."

In other words, before Helena died, the sight of her offended Bertram. But since Helena had died, he had come to love her.

"Well excused," the King said. "That you loved Helena strikes some bad deeds away from the great account of your good and bad deeds, but love that comes too late, like a remorseful pardon slowly carried, to the great sender becomes a sour offence, and love cries, 'She who is gone is good.'"

A pardon too slowly carried arrives too late to help the pardoned person, thus giving the pardoner a bad feeling. Love that comes too late is like that; Bertram said that he loved Helena, but he said that only after she had died, when he could only mourn her.

The King continued, "Our rash faults make a trivial valuation of important, serious things we have, not knowing them until we know their grave. Often our displeasures, which are to ourselves unjust, destroy our friends and afterward weep over their ashes and dust. Our own love waking cries to see what's done, while shame very late sleeps out the afternoon. Love comes to its senses too late, only after our displeasures have destroyed our friends.

"Let this be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her. Send forth your amorous token for fair Madeleine, Lafeu's daughter. The main consents are had, and here we'll stay to see our widower's second marriage-day."

The Countess said, "Make this marriage better than the first, dear Heaven. Bless it! Or, before my son and Lafeu's daughter meet, Nature, cease my existence!"

Lafeu said to Bertram, who was supposed to soon be his son-in-law, "Come on, my son, in whom my house's name must be digested — my daughter will take your name, while my

house's name will be swallowed up — give a favor from you to sparkle in the spirits of my daughter, so that she may quickly come.”

Bertram gave him a ring.

Lafeu looked at the ring and said, “By my old beard, and every hair that's on it, Helen, who is dead, was a sweet creature. Such a ring as this, the last time that I took her leave at court, I saw upon her finger.”

He had kissed Helena's hand when he took leave of her, and so he had closely observed her ring.

“This ring was not hers,” Bertram said. It was the ring that he thought that Diana had given to him.

“Now, please, let me see it,” the King said. “My eye, while I was speaking, often was fastened on it.”

He looked at the ring and said, “This ring was mine, and when I gave it to Helen, I told her that if her fortunes ever stood in necessity of help, if she sent this token to me I would relieve her. Do you have the craftiness to rob and deprive her of what should help her most?”

“My gracious sovereign,” Bertram said, “however it pleases you to take it so, the ring was never hers.”

The Countess said, “Son, I swear on my life, I have seen her wear it, and she valued it as much as she valued her life.”

“I am sure I saw her wear it,” Lafeu said.

“You are deceived, my lord; Helena never saw this ring,” Bertram said. “While I was in Florence, this ring was thrown to me from a window. It was wrapped in a paper, which contained the name of the woman who threw it. She was a noblewoman, and she thought I was single, but when I had acknowledged that I was married and had informed her fully that I could not answer in that course of honor as she had made the overture, she was sad because of this knowledge and ceased pursuing me, although she would never take the ring back again.”

As would soon become apparent, Bertram was lying.

The King said, “Plutus, the god of wealth himself, who knows the tincture and elixir that will turn base metals into gold, thus multiplying the precious metal, has not more knowledge of the mystery of Nature than I have knowledge of this ring. It was mine, and then it was Helen's. These things are true no matter who gave the ring to you. So then, if you have self-knowledge, confess that it was hers, and then confess by what rough enforcement you got this ring from her. She called on the saints to be her guarantors that she would never take this ring off her finger, unless she gave it to you yourself in bed, where you have never come to be with her, or if she sent it to us after she had suffered a great disaster.”

“She never saw this ring,” Bertram repeated.

“You lie,” the King said. “As I love my honor, I swear that you lie. You make misgiving fears come to me that I would gladly shut out of my mind.”

The King was afraid that Bertram had murdered Helena.

He continued, "If it should prove that you are so inhuman ... it will not prove to be true ... and yet I don't know that ... you hated her with a deadly hatred, and she is dead. Nothing, except to close her eyes myself, could make me believe that she is dead more than to see this ring. Take him away."

Guards seized Bertram.

The King said, "The evidence that was already in my possession before I acquired the evidence of this ring, however this matter turns out, shall accuse my fears of little foolishness and vanity, since I foolishly and vainly feared too little."

In other words, the evidence the King had previously acquired would show that the King's fears were not foolish and were not in vain, aka devoid of value; instead, the King had foolishly and vainly not feared enough.

He put the ring on his finger and ordered, "Take Bertram away! We'll examine this matter further."

Bertram said, "If you shall prove that this ring was ever hers, you shall as easily prove that I, as her husband, shared her bed in Florence, a city that Helena has never been in."

The guards took Bertram away.

The King said, "My thoughts are dismal."

The gentleman whom Helena had asked to deliver a paper to the King (see 5.1) entered the room and said, "Gracious sovereign, whether I have been to blame or not, I don't know. Here's a petition from a Florentine, who has for four or five of your stopping places on your journey arrived too late to deliver it to you yourself. I undertook to deliver this petition to you, vanquished by the fair grace and speech of the poor suppliant, who by this time I know is here in Rousillon waiting to talk to you. Her importuning appearance showed that her business is important, and she told me, in a sweet verbal summary, that her business did concern your highness with herself."

The King took the petition, which soon became apparent was from Diana and was about Bertram, and read it out loud:

*"Upon his many protestations to marry me when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. I slept with him. Now that the Count Rousillon is a widower, his vows are legally due to me, and my honor is paid to him. He is legally obliged to marry me, but he stole away from Florence, taking no leave of me, and I have followed him to his country in order to get justice: Grant me justice, King! In you justice best lies; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor maiden is ruined.*

*"DIANA CAPILET."*

Hearing this, Lafeu immediately decided that he did not want Bertram to marry his daughter.

Lafeu said, "I will buy myself a son-in-law at a fair and pay the toll for this one. I'll have nothing to do with him."

Fairs were notorious for selling stolen goods, but Lafeu was saying that he could buy a better son-in-law than Bertram at a fair. He was also saying that he would pay the toll that was

required to sell something — in this case, Bertram — at a fair.

The King said, “The Heavens have thought well of you, Lafeu, and so they have brought forth this discovery.”

In this culture, a respectable woman would not travel alone, and the King knew that other people must have traveled with her.

He ordered, “Seek these petitioners. Go speedily and bring the Count back again.”

Attendants exited to carry out the orders.

He said to the Countess, “I am afraid that the life of Helen, lady, was foully snatched.”

The King thought that Helena had been murdered on Bertram’s orders.

The Countess said, “Now may justice be done on the doers!”

Bertram, guarded, returned.

The King said to him, “I wonder that you still desire to marry, sir, since wives are monsters to you, and since you flee from them as soon as you swear to marry them.”

The widow and Diana entered the room.

The King asked, “What woman is that?”

Diana replied, “I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine, descended from the ancient Capilet. I understand that you know my petition to you, and therefore you know to what extent I may be pitied.”

The widow said, “I am her mother, sir, whose age and honor both suffer under this complaint we bring, and both shall cease without your remedy. Unless you make the Count of Rousillon marry my daughter, my aged self and my honor will die.”

“Come here, Count,” the King said. “Do you know these women?”

“My lord, I neither can nor will deny that I know them,” Bertram said. “Do they charge me with anything else?”

“Why do you look so strangely upon your wife?” Diana asked.

“She’s no wife of mine, my lord,” Bertram said.

“If you shall marry, you give away this hand,” she said, pointing to his hand, “and that is mine because it was pledged to me as part of the betrothal ceremony. You give away Heaven’s vows, and those are mine. You give away myself, which is known to be mine. For I by vow am so embodied yours and so united to you that she who marries you must marry me. She will either marry both of us or marry neither of us.”

Lafeu said to Bertram, “Your reputation comes up too short for my daughter. Your reputation is deficient, and you are no husband for her.”

Bertram said, “My lord, this is a foolish, doting, and desperate creature, whom I have laughed with sometime. Let your highness lay a more noble thought upon my honor than to think that I

would sink it here. You should think more highly of my honor than to think I would lower myself by marrying this woman.”

“Sir, as concerns my thoughts, you will find them ill friends to you until your deeds make them your friends. I hope that your honor proves to be fairer than I think it is.”

“My good lord,” Diana said, “ask him upon his oath, if he thinks he did not take my virginity.”

“What do you say to her?” the King asked Bertram.

“She’s impudent, my lord, and she was a common gamester — prostitute — to soldiers in the military camp,” Bertram replied.

“He does me wrong, my lord,” Diana said. “If I were a common prostitute, he might have bought me at a common price. Do not believe him. Oh, behold this ring, whose high sentimental value as an heirloom and great material value as a ring lack an equal, yet for all that he gave it to a common prostitute of the camp, if I am one.”

“He blushes, and he is hit,” the Countess said. “Of six preceding ancestors, that ring, conferred by will and testament to the succeeding heir, has been owned and worn. This woman is his wife. That ring’s a thousand proofs.”

The King said, “I thought you said that you saw someone here in court who could be your witness.”

“I did, my lord,” Diana said, “but I am loath to produce so bad a witness. His name’s Parolles.”

“I saw the man today, if he is a man,” Lafeu said.

“Find him, and bring him here,” the King ordered.

An attendant exited to carry out the order.

“What about him?” Bertram asked. “He’s considered to be a most perfidious slave, with all the stains and blemishes of the world censured and disparaged, whose disposition sickens when it speaks a truth. Am I either to be considered that or this on the basis of what is uttered by this man who will say anything?”

The King said, “She has your ring.”

“I suppose so,” Bertram said, reluctantly. “It is certain I liked her, and mounted her and had sex with her in the wanton way of youth. She knew to keep her distance and played hard to get and angled for me, maddening my sexual eagerness with her restraint, as all impediments in the course of sexual desire create more sexual desire, and in the end, her infinite cunning, with her commonplace charm, subdued me to the point I met her price. She got the ring, and I had that which any inferior man might have haggled for at a market.”

Diana said, “I must be patient and calm. You, who have dismissed and turned away a very noble first wife, may justly give me less than you gave her. I yet say to you — since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband — ask for your ring, I will return it to you, and you give my ring to me again.”

“I don’t have it,” Bertram said.

“What ring was yours, I ask you?” the King asked Diana.

“Sir, my ring was much like the ring on your finger,” Diana replied.

“Do you know this ring?” the King asked. “This ring was his recently.”

“And this is the ring ‘I’ gave to him in bed,” Diana said.

The King asked, “The story that you threw the ring to him out of a window is false then?”

“I have spoken the truth,” Diana said.

Parolles entered the room.

Bertram said, “My lord, I confess that the ring was hers.”

The King replied, “You boggle — become alarmed — shrewdly. Every feather startles you.”

By “shrewdly,” the King meant “severely,” but Bertram boggled shrewdly in another sense: He knew that Parolles could provide evidence to corroborate Diana’s testimony and so he had admitted that the ring was hers.

The King asked Diana about Parolles, “Is this the man you spoke of?”

“Yes, my lord.”

The King said to Parolles, “Tell me, sirrah, but tell me the truth, I order you. Don’t fear the displeasure of your master, whom I’ll keep from harming you if you tell the truth. What do you know about him and this woman here?”

Parolles replied, “So please your majesty, my master has been an honorable gentleman. He has had tricks in him, which gentlemen have.’

Parolles did not want to offend either Bertram or the King, so he wanted his comments to be understood in more ways than one.

“Honorable gentleman” could be understood positively, but given Bertram’s actions we would not call him an honorable gentleman in a positive sense. However, he is honorable in that he is touchy and proud about his honor, and he is a gentleman in that he engages in the tricks that many men of his position in society engage in.

The King said, “Come, come, get to the point: Did he love this woman?”

“Truly, sir, he did love her, but how?” Parolles said.

“Please tell us how,” the King said.

“He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman,” Parolles said.

“A woman” is “a female commoner” as opposed to “a gentlewoman.”

“How is that?” the King asked.

“He loved her, sir, and he loved her not,” Parolles said.

Bertram had sex with a woman, but he did not want to marry the woman. His “love” for her was sexual, not romantic.

The King said, "You are a knave, and you are no knave. What an equivocal companion is this man! This fellow is evasive and quibbling and equivocating!"

"I am a poor man, and at your majesty's command," Parolles said.

Lafeu said, "He's a good drummer, my lord, but a bad orator. He makes a lot of noise, but little sense."

"Do you know that he promised to marry me?" Diana asked Parolles.

"Truly, I know more than I'll speak," Parolles said.

"Won't you speak all that you know?" the King asked.

"Yes, so please your majesty," Parolles said. "I did go between them, as I said, but more than that, he loved her. Indeed he was mad for her, and talked of Satan and of Limbo and of Furies and I don't know what. He was in torment because he loved her. Yet I had so much credit and such a good reputation with them at that time that I knew of their going to bed, and of other proposals, such as him promising her marriage, and things that would bring down bad things on me if I were to speak about them; therefore, I will not speak what I know."

"You have spoken all already, unless you can say that they are married," the King said, "but you are too subtle and devious in giving your evidence; therefore, stand aside."

The King then said to Diana, "This ring I have, you say, was yours?"

"Yes, my good lord."

"Where did you buy it? Or who gave it to you?"

"It was not given to me, nor did I buy it."

"Who lent it to you?"

"It was not lent to me either."

"Where did you find it, then?"

"I did not find it."

"If it were yours by none of all these ways," the King asked, "how could you give it to him?"

"I never gave it to him," Diana said.

Lafeu said, "This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes off and on at pleasure. She is easily changeable."

"This ring was mine," the King said. "I gave it to his first wife."

"It might be yours or hers, for anything I know," Diana said.

"Take her away," the irritated King said. "I do not like her now. Take her to prison, and take Bertram away."

He said to Diana, "Unless you tell me where you got this ring, you die within this hour."

"I'll never tell you," Diana said.

“Take her away,” the King ordered.

“I’ll make good on my story, my liege,” Diana said. “I can bring forward a witness.”

“I think now that you are some common prostitute,” the King said.

“By Jove, I swear that if I ever sexually knew a man, it was you,” Diana said.

In other words, she swore that she was a virgin.

“Why have you accused him all this while?” the King said.

“Because he is guilty, and he is not guilty,” Diana said. “He ‘knows’ I am no maiden, and he’ll swear to it; I’ll swear I am a maiden, and he does not know it. Great King, I am no strumpet, I swear by my life. I am either a virgin maiden, or else I am this old man’s wife.”

She was referring to Lafeu.

“She abuses our ears with her words,” the King said. “Take her to prison.”

Diana said to the widow, her mother, “Good mother, fetch my witness.”

She added, “Wait, royal sir.”

The widow exited.

Diana continued, “The jeweler who owns the ring is sent for, and ‘he’ shall be a witness for me. But as for this lord, who has abused me, as he ‘knows’ himself, although yet he never harmed me, here I quit — acquit and leave — him. He himself ‘knows’ he has defiled my bed. At that time he got his wife with child. Although she is ‘dead,’ she feels her young one kick. So there’s my riddle: One who is ‘dead’ is quick — she is alive and she feels her unborn baby kicking.”

The widow returned with Helena.

Diana continued, “And now behold the answer of the riddle.”

The King asked, “Isn’t there a magician present who beguiles the accurate function of my eyes and makes me see something that is not there? Is what I see real?”

Magicians were reputed to be able to raise the spirits of the dead.

“No, what you see is not real, my good lord,” Helena said. “It is but the shadow of a wife you see, the name and not the thing.”

Helena meant she had the title of “wife,” but she was not a real wife because her husband had rejected her. But Bertram, seeing her and realizing from what had been said that he had slept with her and that she was pregnant with his child, immediately repented and immediately considered her to be his wife both in name and in deed.

He said to Helena, “You are both, both. I beg you to pardon and forgive me!”

“Oh, my good lord,” Helena replied, “when you thought I was this maiden Diana, I found you wondrously kind. There is your ring, and look, here’s your letter, which says this: ‘*When from my finger you can get this ring and are by me with child,*’ et cetera. What the letter states as conditions have been done. Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?”

Bertram said to the King, "If she, my liege, can make me know clearly all that has happened, I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly."

Helena said, "If it does not appear plain and if it proves to be untrue, then may divorcing death step between me and you!"

She then said to the Countess, "Oh, my dear mother, do I see you living?"

Lafeu said, "My eyes smell onions; I shall weep soon."

He said to Parolles, "Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkerchief. So, I thank you. You shall go home with me and wait on me as a servant. I'll be entertained by you."

Parolles bowed obsequiously.

Lafeu said, "Let your courtesies alone, for they are scurvy ones. Stop bowing."

The King said, "Let us from point to point every particular point of this story know, to make the exact truth in pleasure flow."

He said to Diana, "If you are yet a fresh uncropped flower, choose for yourself a husband, and I'll pay your dower. For I can guess that by your honest aid, you kept a wife a wife, and you kept yourself a virgin maiden. Of that and all the progression of events, more or less, the resolution of loose ends more leisure shall express. All yet seems well, and if it ends the bitter past so fittingly and meet, then more welcome is the sweet."

## ***EPILOGUE***

The King now says to you, the reader:

“The King’s a beggar, now the play is done.

“All is well ended, if this suit is won,

“That you express content, which we will repay,

“With striving to please you, day exceeding day.

“Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;

“Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.”

In other words, the King and all the other characters in this book are actors, and they have been playing roles and striving more and more each day in order to entertain you, the readers, who are their audience. Now the “King” is a beggar who begs you for applause (and good reviews online). The “King” wants the audience and the actors to exchange roles. The audience can act by applauding while the actors make no more sounds, but the actors and playwright and book author will repay the applause (and good online reviews) with gratitude.

## ***CHAPTER II: As You Like It***

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

DUKE SENIOR, living in exile.

FREDERICK, his Brother, Usurper of his Dominions.

AMIENS & JAQUES: Lords attending upon the banished Duke.

LE BEAU, a Courtier, attending upon Frederick.

CHARLES, a Wrestler.

OLIVER, JAQUES, & ORLANDO: Sons of Sir Rowland de Boys.

ADAM & DENNIS: Servants to Oliver.

TOUCHSTONE, a Clown.

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT, a Vicar.

CORIN & SILVIUS: Shepherds.

WILLIAM, a Country Fellow, in love with Audrey.

A person representing Hymen, god of marriage.

#### **The Women**

ROSALIND, Daughter to the banished Duke.

CELIA, Daughter to Frederick.

PHOEBE, a Shepherdess.

AUDREY, a Country Wench.

#### **Other Characters**

Lords, Pages, Foresters, and Attendants.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

Orlando, the third and youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, was talking about his life with Adam, an aged servant of the de Boys family. Some of Orlando's problems in life came from primogeniture, in which the bulk of the family estate is passed down to the oldest son, leaving much less of an inheritance for any younger sons. Such was the case with Orlando. The oldest son's name was Oliver, and Orlando and Adam were talking in Oliver's garden.

Orlando said, "I remember, Adam, that this is the reason why my father left me in his will the small sum of a thousand crowns. But as you said, he also gave my oldest brother, Oliver, the responsibility of raising me well — as a gentleman — if Oliver was to receive our father's blessing. Oliver is raising the middle brother — Jaques — well. Oliver sent him to the university, and according to all reports he is making wonderful progress. But Oliver keeps me at home like a person without money in rural areas. But is 'keep' the right word for a gentleman of my birth? My 'keep' is much like the keeping of an ox in a stall. Oliver's horses are better taken care of than I am. They are well fed, and well-paid hostlers teach them what they need to know. But I, his own brother, gain nothing under him but bodily growth into adulthood. Even the animals lying on dunghills to keep warm owe him that much. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me — my social standing by birth — his behavior seems to seek to take away from me. He lets me eat with his farm workers, will not allow me the place of a brother, and, as much as he is able to, he undermines my noble birth with a lack of proper education. Adam, this grieves me, and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this brother-imposed servitude. I will no longer endure it, though so far I know no intelligent way to avoid it."

Adam looked away and then replied, "Yonder comes my master, your eldest brother."

Orlando said, "Go stand aside, Adam, and you shall hear how he will taunt me."

Oliver walked up to Orlando and said mockingly, "Now, sir! What are you doing here?"

"Nothing," Orlando replied. "I can do nothing. I have not been educated to make anything of myself."

"If you are not making anything, then what are you marring?"

"Sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours. I am marring myself with idleness for lack of something better to do."

"Then be better employed, and be quick about it."

"Shall I keep your hogs and eat scraps with them? That is what the prodigal son did in Luke 15:11-32. He received his inheritance and spent it and was forced to become a servant swineherd and eat the swine's food to keep himself from starving. But what prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury as did the prodigal son? I have never received my inheritance."

"Do you know where you are, sir?"

“Very well, sir. I am in your garden.”

“Do you know to whom you are speaking, sir?”

“Yes, I know you better than you know me,” Orlando replied. “I know that you are my eldest brother, and you should know that I share your heritage and family and blood. According to primogeniture, you are my better, because you were first born, but primogeniture does not deny my heritage. Even if twenty brothers were born in between you and me, I would still have as much of our father in me as you have. However, I confess that your being born first makes you the head of our family and therefore entitled to more respect than I am.”

Angry, Oliver hit Orlando and called him a name: “Take that, boy!”

Angered by the blow and the insult, Orlando seized Oliver and held on to him to protect himself from any more blows.

He said to Oliver, “You are too young in strength; you are weaker than I am, and you are not the fighter that I am.”

“Do you dare to lay hands on me, villain!”

A villain can be either a rogue or a peasant. Oliver used the word to mean “rogue,” but in his reply Orlando used the other meaning.

“A villain is a peasant,” Orlando said. “I am no villain. I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys; he was my father. Anyone who says that such a father gave birth to villains is three times a villain. If you were not my brother, I would not take this hand from your throat until my other hand had pulled out your tongue for saying that our father had given birth to a villain. By saying that, you have insulted yourself.”

Adam said, “Sweet masters, don’t fight. In memory of your father and for your father’s sake, make peace with each other.”

Oliver said, “Let me go, I say.”

“I will not let you go until I want to,” Orlando replied. “First, listen to me. My father charged you in his will to give me a good education; instead, you have trained me like a peasant, not allowing me the chance to acquire the accomplishments of a gentleman. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure your treatment; therefore, give me the education that a gentleman ought to have, or give me the small inheritance that my father left me in his will. With that small inheritance, I will leave here and seek my fortune elsewhere.”

“And what will you do? Will you beg after you have spent your inheritance? Well, sir, go inside the house. I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of what you want. Leave me now.”

“I will bother you no more than is necessary to get what I need.”

Oliver said to Adam, “Go with him, you old dog.”

Adam said, “Is being called ‘old dog’ my reward for serving your family for decades? Truly, I have lost my teeth in your family’s service. May God be with my old master! He would not have called me an old dog.”

Orlando and Adam left the garden.

Alone, Oliver said, "So this is what it comes down to. It's a showdown between you and me. You have become a nuisance to me. You have grown wild, Orlando, but I will give you your medicine and curb your wildness. And that medicine will not be one thousand crowns."

He summoned a servant: "Come here, Dennis!"

Dennis arrived and asked, "How may I help you?"

"Isn't Charles, Duke Frederick's wrestler, here to speak with me?"

"Yes, he is here at the door and wants to speak with you."

"Call him in."

Dennis left to get Charles.

"This is a good way to solve my problem," Oliver said. "Tomorrow there will be wrestling."

Charles entered and said, "Good day to your worship."

"Good Monsieur Charles, what's the new news at the new court?"

"The news at the court," Charles said, "is the old news. Old Senior has been banished by his younger brother, Duke Frederick. Three or four lords who greatly respect Duke Senior have gone into exile — in their case, voluntarily — with him. Duke Frederick allowed them to go into exile so he could seize their lands and revenues and enrich himself."

"Can you tell me if Rosalind, Duke Senior's daughter, is banished with her father?"

"She has not been banished," Charles replied. "Duke Frederick's daughter, Celia, so loves Rosalind, with whom she has been friends since both were in the cradle, that Celia would have followed her into exile — or if prevented from following her, she would have died of grief. Rosalind is at the court, and her uncle, Duke Frederick, loves her no less than his own daughter, Celia — never have two ladies loved each other as Celia and Rosalind do."

"Where will the old Duke — Duke Senior — live?"

"People say that he is already in the Forest of Arden, and that he has many merry men with him, and there in the forest they live like the old Robin Hood of England. People say that many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and they spend the time without cares, as was the case in the Golden Age of classical mythology. They live without cares and with great ease."

"Will you wrestle tomorrow before Duke Frederick?"

"Yes, I will," Charles said. "In fact, this is why I am here. I have learned from secret sources that your younger brother Orlando intends to put on a disguise and wrestle against me. However, tomorrow, sir, I wrestle to protect and improve my reputation, and any wrestler who escapes from me without suffering a broken limb shall acquit himself well. Your brother is but young and tender, and out of respect for you, I am loath to defeat and injure him, as I must do, for my own reputation, if he wrestles against me. Therefore, because I respect you, I came here to tell you these things so that either you might convince him not to wrestle me or prepare yourself to endure disgrace when I defeat your youngest brother. A wrestling match between

him and me is something that he — not I — wants. My wrestling your youngest brother is completely against my will.”

“Charles, I thank you for your respect for and loyalty to me, which you will find I will most appropriately reward. I have previously learned of my brother’s plan to wrestle you and I have tried unobtrusively to dissuade him from wrestling you, but he is determined to carry out his plan. I tell you, Charles, that my youngest brother is the most ruthless young fellow of all France. He is full of ambition, he envies every man’s good qualities and abilities, and he is a secret and villainous contriver against me, his birth brother. Therefore, use your own discretion. As for myself, I would prefer that you break his neck than his finger. But be careful because if he thinks that you have defeated him by even by a little and if he fails to score a notable victory against you, he will plot against you and try to poison you. He will try to trap you with some treacherous plot, and he will never leave you alone until he has killed you by some indirect means or other so that he is not punished for your death. I am almost in tears as I tell you truly that no one as young and as villainous as Orlando is alive today. I am his brother, and I speak as a brother, but if I were to explain to you his real character in every detail, then I must blush and weep and you must look pale and wonder.”

“I am heartily glad I came here and spoke to you,” Charles said. “If Orlando comes to wrestle me tomorrow, I will give him his payment. If he ever again walks without crutches, I will retire from professional wrestling. May God bless you.”

“Farewell, good Charles,” Oliver said.

Charles left, and Oliver said to himself, “Now I will provoke this gamester — my youngest brother. I hope I shall see an end of him — his death. My soul, I do not know why, hates nothing more than him, yet he is endowed with the qualities of a gentleman. He has never been schooled and yet he is learned, and he is full of gentlemanliness. He is enchantingly — as if they were under a spell — beloved by all ranks of people, and indeed the world itself loves him. Especially my own subjects, who best know him, love him so much that they prefer him to me and they despise me. But this shall not last much longer. Charles the wrestler shall solve my problems. All that I need to do is to find Orlando and incite the boy to wrestle tomorrow, and I will go right now and do that.”

— 1.2 —

On the lawn in front of the Duke’s palace, Celia and Rosalind talked.

Celia said, “Please, dear cousin, be merry.”

“Dear Celia, I already am showing more happiness than I feel, and yet you want me to appear to be even happier? Unless you can teach me to forget my banished father, you must not tell me to think about any extraordinary pleasure.”

“Here I see that you do not love me as much as I love you,” Celia said. “If my uncle, Duke Senior — who is your banished father — had banished your uncle, Duke Frederick — who is my father — as long as you stayed with me, I could have taught myself to regard your father as my father. You would do the same thing for me if you loved me as much as I love you.”

“Well, I will forget the condition of my situation in life, so that I can rejoice in the condition of your situation in life.”

“You know that my father has no child but me,” Celia said, “and he is unlikely to have any more children. When my father dies, you shall be his heir because what he has taken away from your father by force, I will give to you. I swear it. If I break this oath, let me turn into a monster. Therefore, my sweet and dear Rose, be happy.”

Rosalind replied, “From here on, I will, cousin, and I will think of games for us to play together. Let me see. What do you think about falling in love?”

“Go ahead and fall in love,” Celia replied, “so we can laugh about it. But do not fall in love for real and in earnest. Fall in love no further than you can get out of love with an innocent blush and with your honor and reputation intact.”

“What shall we do to amuse ourselves, then?”

“Let us sit and mock the good housewife — make that hussy — Fortune so that she turns away from the wheel that she spins and then gives either good or bad fortune according to the turn of the wheel. Once Fortune has abandoned her Wheel of Fortune, she will be forced to give away her gifts in equal measures.”

“I wish that we could do that,” Rosalind said, “because Fortune’s gifts are mightily misplaced. Fortune is blind, and it shows when she gives gifts to women.”

“That is true because those women whom Fortune makes beautiful she rarely makes virtuous, and those women she makes virtuous she usually makes ugly.”

“No,” Rosalind objected. “You are mixing up Fortune and Nature. Fortune determines whether we have good or bad fortune, and Nature makes us attractive or ugly.”

Touchstone, a professional fool, aka court jester, walked close to Celia and Rosalind. His job was to make Duke Frederick and others laugh, and he got his name from a stone that was used to test the purity of gold and silver. To call Touchstone a fool was not really an insult — it was more of a job description like calling someone a tailor or cobbler. As a fool, Touchstone had the privilege to insult other people without being punished for it — although sometimes he could be threatened with punishment.

“Are you sure about that?” Celia asked. “Nature may make a woman beautiful, but Fortune may make her fall in a fire and mar her beauty. Nature may have given us enough wit and intelligence to mock Fortune, but did not Fortune send in this fool to stop our mocking her?”

“Indeed, Fortune is more powerful than Nature,” Rosalind replied. “This is shown by Fortune sending in a fool to stop us from using our wits — our gifts from Nature — to make fun of Fortune.”

“Perhaps this is not the work of Fortune,” Celia said. “Perhaps Nature sees that our natural wits are too dull to discuss such goddesses as Fortune, and therefore Nature sent us this fool to be our whetstone and sharpen our wits instead of our knives. The dullness of a fool always sharpens the wits of other people.”

Celia asked Touchstone, “Hello, wit. Where are you going?”

“Mistress, you must go to your father.”

“What warrants making you the messenger?” Celia asked.

“I have no warrant for your arrest, but on my honor I was told to come to you and deliver a message.”

“That’s a fancy phrase: ‘on my honor.’ Where did you learn that phrase, fool?” Rosalind asked.

“I learned it from a certain knight who swore by his honor that the pancakes were good and swore by his honor that the mustard was bad. I disagree: The pancakes were bad and the mustard was good. Nevertheless, the knight did not commit perjury.”

“Tell us your reasoning,” Celia said. “Use the great heap of your knowledge to prove that the knight did not commit perjury.”

“Yes, please prove that,” Rosalind said. “Unmuzzle your wisdom.”

“I will indeed,” Touchstone said, “but first stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave.”

Celia replied, “By our beards, if we had them, we swear that you are a knave.”

“If I were a knave, I would swear by my knavery that I am a knave. But I have no knavery. Anyone who swears by something that he or she does not have commits no perjury. This knight swore by his honor, but he had no honor. Either he never had any honor, or if he once had honor, he had sworn it away by breaking oaths before he ever saw those pancakes or that mustard.”

“Please tell which knight you mean,” Celia said.

“A knight whom old Frederick, your father, respects.”

“In that case, my father’s respect is enough to honor him, so enough! Talk no more about that knight — you will be whipped for slander one of these days.”

“It is a pity that fools may not speak wisely about what wise men do foolishly. That is part of the job of a fool.”

“You are saying the truth,” Celia said. “A book burning was held recently, and many books of satire perished in the flames. Ever since then, the little wit that fools have has been silenced, and the little foolery that wise men have has become greatly more apparent. A fool who mocks the foolishness of wise men helps keep wise men wise.”

She looked up and said, “Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.”

Rosalind said, “He seems eager to tell us something. His mouth is full of news.”

“He will force his news on us the way that parent pigeons force their nestlings to feed,” Celia said.

“We will be force-fed and crammed with news.”

“If we were birds or animals at the market, we would be more valuable because birds and animals are sold by weight,” Celia said.

She greeted Monsieur Le Beau: “*Bon jour*, Monsieur. What’s the news?”

“Fair princess, you have missed out on some good entertainment.”

“Entertainment? What kind of entertainment?”

“I’m not quite sure how to answer that,” Monsieur Le Beau said.

Rosalind said, “Answer it the way that your wit and fortune allow you to answer it.”

“Or answer it as the Destinies decree,” Touchstone said. “The Destinies are the Fates, and they rule our lives.”

“Well said,” Celia complimented Touchstone. “You are using a trowel to coat your words with learning.”

“I am a jester,” Touchstone said. “My rank is my reputation. I must keep up my rank.”

“Unless you keep up your rankness, you won’t be able to smell yourself,” Rosalind joked.

Monsieur Le Beau said, “You amaze me, ladies. I wanted to tell you about some good wrestling that you are missing.”

“Tell us what kind of wrestling,” Rosalind said.

“I will tell you about the wrestling that has already happened, and if you want to, you can see the rest of the wrestling — the best part is yet to come,” Monsieur Le Beau said. “Here, where you are now, is where the wrestling will take place.”

“Tell us about the wrestling that is already over, that is dead and buried,” Celia said.

Monsieur Le Beau began, “There comes an old man and his three sons —”

Celia interrupted him: “I could match this beginning with an old fairy tale. Many old fairy tales are about an old man and his three children.”

“They are three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence.”

“Presence?” Rosalind asked. “They must have had proclamations hanging from their necks — proclamations that begin, ‘Be it known to all men by these presents — by this public proclamation ....’”

Monsieur Le Beau continued, “The eldest of the three sons wrestled with Charles, Duke Frederick’s champion wrestler. Charles quickly threw him and broke three of his ribs. There is little hope that he will survive. Charles then did the same thing with the second son and the third son. They are still lying there. Their poor old father is crying with such grief that all the witnesses of the wrestling are crying with him.”

Touchstone asked, “What is the entertainment that these ladies have been missing, Monsieur Le Beau?”

“Why, the wrestling that I have been talking about.”

“Men may grow wiser everyday,” Touchstone said. “This is the first time that I ever heard that the breaking of ribs was entertainment for ladies.”

“It is also the first time that I have heard it,” Celia said.

“Does anyone else want to see this wrestling and listen to the broken ‘music’ of breath performed with broken ribs?” Rosalind asked. “Is anyone else tempted to listen to the breaking

of ribs? Celia, shall we see this wrestling?”

“You must see the wrestling, if you stay here,” Monsieur Le Beau said. “This is the place where the wrestling will take place, and this is the time for the wrestling to start.”

“That is true,” Celia said. “I see that the wrestlers and the crowd are coming. Let us stay here and watch the match.”

Duke Frederick, various Lords, Orlando, Charles, and many others walked over to Celia, Rosalind, Touchstone, and Monsieur Le Beau.

Duke Frederick said, “The youthful challenger — Orlando — is determined to wrestle Charles, although we have tried to dissuade him. His own recklessness is putting him in peril.”

“Is he Orlando?” Rosalind said, gesturing to a man.

“Yes, he is, madam,” Monsieur Le Beau said.

“It’s a pity — he is too young,” Celia said. “Yet he looks strong and like a wrestler. He looks as if he could defeat Charles.”

“Hi, daughter and niece,” Duke Frederick said. “Have you come here to see the wrestling?”

“Yes, my liege,” Rosalind said, “as long as it’s OK with you.”

“You will take little delight in it, I can tell you,” he said. “The odds are greatly against this young man. I would gladly convince Orlando not to wrestle Charles, but he won’t listen to me. Speak to him, ladies; see if you can persuade him not to wrestle Charles.”

“Bring Orlando over to us, good Monsieur Le Beau,” Celia said.

Duke Frederick said to Monsieur Le Beau, “Do that. I will leave so that the princesses can talk to Orlando privately.”

Monsieur Le Beau said to Orlando, “Challenger, the princesses want to talk to you.”

“I will go to them with all the respect and duty that is due to them,” Orlando replied.

Rosalind asked him, “Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?”

“No, fair princess. Charles is the general challenger: He will wrestle anyone who wants to wrestle him. I came here like others to wrestle him and test the strength of my youth.”

“Young gentleman, you are too bold for your age,” Celia said to Orlando. “You have seen cruel proof of this man’s strength in the number of ribs that he has broken. If you looked at yourself carefully and carefully considered what you are able to do, you would feel fear and choose another activity to engage in. Both of us ask you, for your own sake, to think about your own safety and not wrestle Charles.”

“Do as Celia asks, young sir,” Rosalind said. “Your reputation shall not be harmed by it. We will plead to Duke Frederick to stop the wrestling match before it starts. You will not be blamed for not wrestling Charles.”

“Thank you, but no,” Orlando said. “Do not regard me badly because I am refusing your request. I hate to deny anything to two such fair and excellent ladies as you. But let your fair

eyes and gentle wishes go with me as I wrestle Charles. If Charles defeats me, then I will be the only one who is shamed, and I have never had good fortune anyway. If Charles kills me, then so be it. I am willing to die. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have no friends to mourn me. I shall do the world no injury, for in the world I have nothing. In the world, I only fill up a space, and when I am dead, perhaps a better person will take my place.”

Rosalind said, “The little strength that I have, I wish that I could give to you to help you in this match.”

“And I wish that I could give you the little strength that I have,” Celia said, “so it could be added to hers.”

“Fare you well,” Rosalind said. “I hope to God that you can defeat Charles although I know that the odds are against you.”

“I hope that you get your heart’s desire,” Celia said.

Charles said loudly, “Let’s get started. Where is the young gallant who is eager to be buried and lie with his mother Earth?”

“I am ready to wrestle you, sir,” Orlando said, “but I am not ready to lie with my mother Earth. My goal is different.”

Duke Frederick said, “This wrestling match will consist of only one round and one fall.”

Charles boasted, “I am sure that you will not be able to persuade this man to undertake a second round although you could not dissuade him from undertaking a first round. I will defeat him so badly that he won’t be able to wrestle a second round.”

Orlando said to Charles, “You intend to mock me after the round, and that’s OK if you can defeat me, but you should not mock me before the round. But let’s get started.”

“May Hercules, the strongest of the ancient Greek heroes, give you success,” Rosalind said to Orlando.

“I wish I were invisible so I could grab the strong Charles by the leg and help Orlando,” Celia said.

Charles and Orlando started to wrestle.

Rosalind said about Orlando, “He is an excellent young man!”

“If I had the Roman god Jupiter’s power of hurling thunderbolts, I would shoot down Charles,” Celia said.

Orlando threw Charles and won the wrestling match.

“No more!” Duke Frederick said. “The wrestling match is over.”

“I am ready to wrestle some more,” Orlando said. “I am not yet winded; in fact, I am not even properly warmed up.”

“How are you, Charles?” Duke Frederick asked.

“He is unconscious and cannot speak, my Lord,” Monsieur Le Beau said.

“Carry him away,” Duke Frederick said.

He asked Orlando, “What is your name, young man?”

“Orlando, my Lord. I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.”

“I wish that you were the son of some other man. The world regarded your father as an honorable man, but I always found him to be my enemy. Your athletic victory today would have pleased me better if you were a member of some other family. But may you fare well; you are a gallant youth. Still, I wish that you had told me that another man is your father.”

Most of the people present left, leaving behind Rosalind, Celia, and Orlando. Rosalind and Celia stood apart from Orlando.

Celia was disappointed in her father’s reaction to learning who Orlando’s father was. She felt that her father had been rude to Orlando.

She said to Rosalind, “If I were my father, I would have acted better than my father did.”

Orlando said to himself, “I am very proud to be Sir Rowland’s son, his youngest son, and I would not change that even to be Duke Frederick’s adopted heir.”

Rosalind said to Celia, “My father loved Sir Rowland as if Sir Rowland were his soul, and everyone else in the world shared my father’s good opinion of Sir Rowland. Had I before known that this young man was his son, I would have added tears to my entreaties because of my fear that he would be injured or killed in this wrestling match.”

Celia replied, “Gentle cousin, let us go and thank and encourage Orlando. My father’s rough and malicious words to him wound me in my heart.”

They went to Orlando, and Celia said, “Sir, you have well deserved this athletic victory. If you keep your promises in love as well as you keep your promises in wrestling — doing far more than anyone expected — your wife will be happy and fortunate.”

Rosalind removed a necklace from her neck and gave it to Orlando, saying, “Wear this for me: a woman who is out of favor with fortune. I wish that I could give you more, but I lack more to give.”

Rosalind expected Orlando to thank her, but he only stared at her.

She said to Celia, “Shall we go, cousin?”

Celia replied, “Yes.”

To Orlando, Celia said, “Fare you well, fair gentleman.”

Orlando did not reply to the two young women. Already, he was in love with Rosalind, and he found himself unable to speak. He was brave enough to wrestle Charles, Duke Frederick’s champion wrestler, but he was not brave enough to speak to Rosalind.

But Orlando did reprimand himself, to himself, “Can’t I even say, ‘I thank you?’ My bravery has disappeared, and the man I am right now is only a mannequin, a mere lifeless block.”

Already, Rosalind was in love with Orlando. Hearing him mutter to himself, she said to Celia, “He is calling for us to come back to him.”

Eager to talk to Orlando, she said to herself, “My good fortune left me earlier in life. Now I am losing my pride and chasing this young man. I will ask him what he wants.”

Rosalind asked Orlando, “Did you call, sir? Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown more than your enemies.”

She thought, *That’s a pretty good hint to him that he has overthrown me and that I am in love with him.*

Poor Orlando could not speak; he could only stare.

Celia said to Rosalind, “Are you ready to go now?”

Rosalind replied to her, “Yes, I am ready.”

To Orlando, she said, “Fare you well.”

As Rosalind and Celia left, Rosalind thought, *Orlando needs to be educated in romance. For one more thing, he has to learn how to be comfortable when talking to a young woman he likes. Unless he can do that, he will not go far in love. Unless he is comfortable when talking to a young woman he likes, he is unlikely ever to be the father of her children.*

If Orlando could have heard Rosalind’s thoughts, he would have agreed with her. He said to himself, “What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? I could not speak to Rosalind, although she wanted me to speak to her. Poor Orlando, you have been overthrown! Charles could not defeat you, but this much weaker woman has conquered you.”

Monsieur Le Beau walked up to Orlando and said, “Good sir, I do in friendship advise you to leave this place. Although you have earned and deserve high praise, true applause, and respect, yet Duke Frederick is now of such a temperament that he misinterprets all that you have done. It is better for you to imagine the kind of person Duke Frederick is than for me to tell you.”

“I thank you, sir,” Orlando replied, adding, “Please, tell me this: Which of the two young women who were here at the wrestling match is the daughter of Duke Frederick?”

“Fortunately, neither of the two young women has Duke Frederick’s bad manners,” Monsieur Le Beau replied, “but the shorter of the two is his daughter, Celia. The other, taller young woman is the daughter of the banished Duke Senior. Her name is Rosalind, and her usurping uncle is keeping her here to keep his daughter company. The two young women love each other more than sisters do. However, I can tell you that Duke Frederick has recently taken a dislike to Rosalind, his well-born niece, for no other reason than that the citizens praise her for her virtues and pity her for her good father’s sake. I swear by my own life that quickly Duke Frederick’s hatred for Rosalind will erupt. Sir, farewell. Later, in a better world, I would like to know you better.”

“I am much obliged to you,” Orlando said. “Goodbye.”

Monsieur Le Beau left.

Orlando said to himself, “Now I must go from the frying pan into the fire. I must go from the tyrant Duke Frederick to my tyrant eldest brother, Oliver. And, oh, I am in love with the Heavenly Rosalind.”

In a room of Duke Frederick's palace, Rosalind and Celia were talking.

Celia said to Rosalind, "Why, cousin! You are so quiet! May Cupid, the god of love, have mercy on you! Can't you speak a word?"

"You have heard of people who are so poor that they aren't even able to throw scraps of food to a dog. I am not able to throw even a word to a dog."

"Your words are too precious to be cast away upon curs," Celia said. "Throw some of your words at me. Some people throw rocks at dogs to maim them and make them lame, so come, throw your words at me and lame me."

"If I did that, both of us would then be hurt. You would be lamed with words, and I would be crazy."

"Are you depressed because of your father?"

"Yes, but I am also depressed because of the man who should be the father of my child, when I have one. I am crazy in love with someone who can't even speak to me. Right now, the world is wearisome and full of briers."

"They are only burs, cousin, that have been thrown at you because of your foolish behavior when you chased after a man as if you were on a holiday. Act conventionally, and you will not suffer in this way. Unless we walk in the well-trodden paths, our petticoats will catch burs."

"I could shake those burs off the bottoms of my petticoats; these burs are in my heart."

"Hem them away."

"I could 'hem' them away, if I could have Orlando."

"Come, come, wrestle with your affections."

"My affections are for a better wrestler than myself!"

"If you get your wish, eventually you will wrestle him, with you lying flat on your back with your legs apart," Celia said. "But let us put aside these jokes and instead talk earnestly. Is it really possible, that you — so suddenly — have fallen in love with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?"

"Duke Senior, my father, loved his father dearly."

"Does it therefore follow that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of argument, I should hate Orlando because my father hated his father dearly, but I do not hate Orlando."

"No, do not hate Orlando — for my sake."

"Why shouldn't I hate Orlando? By this kind of argument, I ought to hate him — by this kind of argument, he deserves my hatred."

"Let me love him because he deserves my love. You can love him because I love him."

Rosalind added, "Look, here comes your father, Duke Frederick."

"His eyes are full of anger," Celia said.

Duke Frederick and some Lords entered the room.

Duke Frederick said to Rosalind, "Madam, as quickly as you safely can, get out of my court."

"Do you mean me, uncle?"

"Yes, I mean you, niece. If, after ten days, you are found within twenty miles of my court, you will die."

"Please, uncle, tell me the nature of my offence. Tell me what I have done wrong. If I know my own thoughts and desires — if I am not dreaming or insane, and I don't think that I am — then I, dear uncle, have never come close to thinking or desiring anything that would offend you."

"So say all traitors," Duke Frederick replied. "If they could be cleared by their own words, all of them would be as innocent as virtue itself. Let me tell you plainly that I do not trust you."

"Even your mistrust cannot make me a traitor: Tell me the grounds on which you believe that I am a traitor."

"You are your father's daughter. That is enough reason to think that you are a traitor."

"I was my father's daughter when you took his Dukedom," Rosalind said. "I was my father's daughter when you banished him. Treason is not inherited, my Lord. But even if treason were contagious and we did catch it from our friends, how does that apply to me? My father was no traitor. My good Lord, do not think that my poverty has made me a traitor. Although I am poor, I am not a traitor."

"Dear sovereign father, listen to me," Celia said.

"Celia, I have allowed Rosalind to stay here for your sake. If not for you, I would have made her go with her father when he went into exile."

"I did not then beg you to have Rosalind stay here. That was your own decision, made because you yourself wanted her to stay and because you felt remorse for your own actions. I was too young at that time to value Rosalind, but now I know her. If she is a traitor, then so am I. We always have slept together, gotten up together, been educated together, eaten together, and wherever we went, we went together and inseparable, like the two swans that pull the chariot in which Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage, rides."

"Rosalind is too cunning for you," Duke Frederick replied. "Her deceptive charm, her silence, and her patience appeal to the people, and they pity her. You are a fool: She robs you of your reputation — you will appear brighter and seem more virtuous after she is gone. So do not open your lips. Firm and irrevocable are the judgment and the punishment that I have given to her. She is banished from my Dukedom."

"Then give me the same judgment and punishment," Celia said. "I cannot live without Rosalind's companionship."

"You are a fool," Duke Frederick said to Celia.

He said to Rosalind, "You, niece, prepare yourself for your journey into exile. If you are still here after ten days, I swear that you will die."

He and the other Lords left the room.

“Oh, my poor Rosalind,” Celia said, “where will you go? Are you willing to exchange fathers? I will give you my father in return for your father. Please, do not be more grieved than I am.”

“I have more cause for grief.”

“No, you don’t,” Celia said. “Be cheerful. Don’t you know that my father, Duke Frederick, has banished me?”

“No, he has not.”

“Hasn’t he? You, Rosalind, lack the love that ought to teach you that you and I are one. Shall we be sundered? Shall we be parted, sweet girl? No. Let my father seek another heir. Therefore plan with me how we may flee into exile. Let us plan where to go and what to take with us. Do not seek to go alone, to bear your griefs by yourself and leave me here. I swear by the Heavens, which have grown pale because of our sorrows, that no matter what you say, I will go with you into exile.”

“Where shall we go?” Rosalind asked.

“To seek my uncle — your father — in the Forest of Arden.”

“We will be in danger. We are two young virgins traveling so far alone! Our feminine beauty will make us even more of a target for criminals than money alone would.”

“I will wear poor and mean clothing and with a kind of brown paint will darken my face to make myself look like a peasant instead of a court lady. You can do the same thing. If we look like poor peasants, we shall be able to travel and never be bothered by assailants.”

“Wouldn’t it better,” Rosalind replied, “if, because I am tall for a woman, I were to dress and act like a man? I could carry a gallant short sword upon my thigh, a boar-spear in my hand, and a swashing and martial outside appearance, while I hide in my heart whatever womanish fears I feel. I will do what other cowards do — I will act as if I am brave when I do not feel brave at all. And you and I could be brother and sister.”

“What shall I call you when you are dressed like a man?”

“I’ll have no worse a name than the god Jupiter’s own page,” Rosalind said. “He saw a boy named Ganymede and kidnapped him to be his cup-bearer. Therefore, call me Ganymede. But what name will you take?”

“I will take a name that is suitable to my new situation in life. I will no longer be called Celia. Instead, call me Aliena — the Estranged One. My father and I are now estranged.”

“Cousin, here’s a good idea. Let’s take Touchstone the fool with us when we leave your father’s court. Wouldn’t he be a comfort as we travel?”

“He will be happy to go with me and travel the wide world with me,” Celia said to Rosalind. “Leave it to me to talk to him. Let us go now and get our jewels and our wealth together. We will plan the best time and the safest way to leave so that we will escape the pursuit that will be made after my father discovers that I have gone into exile with you. Now we can go contently — we are going into liberty and not into banishment.”

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

Duke Senior, the Lord Amiens, and a few other Lords were talking together in the Forest of Arden. All of them were dressed like foresters.

Duke Senior said, “Now, my companions and brothers in exile, have we not grown used to our new way of life and don’t we now agree that this way of life is better than a life of artificial splendor? Are not these woods freer from danger than the envious and malicious court? Here we feel only the penalty of Adam, who was sent away from the Garden of Eden into exile. We feel the different seasons, such as the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter’s wind, which, when it bites and blows upon my body, even as I shrink with cold, I smile and say, ‘This is no flattery: These are counselors who powerfully tell me what I really am.’ Sweet are the uses of adversity — adversity makes men wise. Adversity is like an ugly toad that according to folklore is poisonous and yet has a jewel — the toadstone — in its head that protects itself and others from poison. Our life is free from interruption from other people, and here we can listen to the trees, read the running brooks, and learn about natural theology from stones. Everything here in Nature is good.”

Amiens, a Lord who had followed Duke Senior into exile and who was a good singer, said, “I would not change anything. Happy is your grace, who can translate the harshness of fortune into so quiet and so sweet a state of mind. You are able to look at bad fortune and see what good may come from it.”

“Come, shall we go and kill us a deer and eat venison?” Duke Senior asked. “And yet it irks me that the poor dappled fools, being native citizens of this scarcely populated territory, should in their own land have their round haunches gored with arrowheads.”

A Lord said, “Indeed, Duke Senior, the melancholy Jaques grieves at that, also, and accordingly, he swears that you do more usurp the deer’s territory than your younger brother, Duke Frederick, usurped your territory when he banished you. Today my Lord of Amiens and I did creep up behind Jaques as he lay under an oak whose ancient root pokes out near the brook that flows noisily through this wood. To that place came a poor stag that had been separated from its herd. A hunter had wounded it, and indeed, my Lord, the wretched animal heaved forth such groans that their discharge did stretch his leathern coat until it seemed that he would burst his hide, and the stag’s big round tears trickled down his innocent nose as they chased each other, arousing pity. The melancholy Jaques looked at the hairy stag as it stood on the edge of the brook and added its tears to the brook’s water.”

“What did Jaques say?” Duke Senior asked. “Knowing him, he would have drawn moral lessons from this stag’s suffering.”

The Lord replied, “You are correct. Jaques made a thousand similes. Seeing the stag dropping his tears into the stream, Jaques said, ‘Poor deer, you are making a last will and testament the way that materialistic humans do. You give more to what already has too much. The stream of water hardly needs your tears.’ Seeing the stag alone, abandoned by its herd, Jaques said, ‘Misery stops a stream of visitors. A poor or ill person has few visitors.’ Soon, a carefree herd of deer that had eaten its fill of grass in a meadow ran by the wounded stag and did not stop to

greet him. Seeing this, Jaques said, ‘Run on, you fat and greasy citizens. This is the current fashion. Why should you bother to look upon this poor and broken wretch here?’ Thus he harshly criticized and pierced the heart of the country, city, court, and even our way of life here. He swore that we are mere usurpers and tyrants and whatever is worse than usurpers and tyrants, because we frighten the animals and kill them in their Heavenly assigned and native dwelling places.”

“Did you leave him to his contemplations?” Duke Senior asked.

A second Lord said, “We did, my Lord. He was weeping and commenting on the sobbing deer.”

“Show me where he is,” Duke Senior said. “I love to debate him when he is in one of these moralizing moods because then he has a lot to say.”

The first Lord said, “I will take you to him right away.”

— 2.2 —

In a room in his palace, Duke Frederick questioned some Lords.

“Is it possible that no one saw Celia and Rosalind leave the palace? It cannot be. Some villains in my court knew about this and assisted them.”

A Lord said, “I cannot find anyone who saw your daughter leave. The ladies, her attendants of her chamber, saw her go to bed in the evening, and early in the morning, they found her bed empty.”

Another Lord said, “Duke Frederick, the vulgar and despicable clown at whom so often you have been accustomed to laugh is also missing. Hisperia, the princess Celia’s gentlewoman, confesses that she secretly overheard Celia and Rosalind much compliment the good qualities and accomplishments of Orlando, the wrestler who recently defeated the sinewy Charles. Hisperia believes that wherever Celia and Rosalind are gone, Orlando is surely with them.”

Duke Frederick said, “Send someone to Orlando’s brother Oliver. The messenger must bring Orlando to me, or if Orlando is gone, the messenger must bring Oliver to me. I will make Oliver find Orlando. Do this at once. Meanwhile, we will continue to inquire after and search for these foolish runaways and bring them back.”

— 2.3 —

In front of Oliver’s house, Orlando and the family’s aged servant, Adam, met.

Orlando asked, “Who’s there?”

Recognizing Orlando’s voice, Adam said, “My young master! My gentle master! My sweet master! You memory of old Sir Rowland! Why, what are you doing here? Why are you so virtuous? Why do people love you so much? And why are you gentle, strong, and valiant? Why were you so foolish that you defeated the strong wrestler of the moody Duke Frederick? Your praise has come home before you have come home. Don’t you know, master, that for some men virtues and accomplishments are dangerous to have because they make other people jealous and murderous? Your virtues and accomplishments are like that. Gentle master, your

virtues and accomplishments are sanctified and holy traitors to you. What kind of a world is this, when what is good and beautiful in a man poisons him and leads to his death!”

“What’s the matter? What’s going on?” Orlando asked.

“Unhappy youth!” Adam replied. “Don’t come inside here. Under this roof lives someone who is the enemy of all your good qualities. Your brother — no, he does not act like a brother. Yet he is the son — but no, I won’t call him the son of the man I was about to call his father. But under this roof lives someone who has heard the praise you received for defeating Charles, and this night he means to burn down the place where you are accustomed to sleep and so kill you. If he fails to kill you that way, he has other ways to stop your heart. I overheard him and his plans. This house is no home; this house is a slaughterhouse. Abhor it, fear it, and do not enter it.”

“Then where, Adam, do you think I should go?”

“It does not matter where you go, as long as you don’t come here.”

“Do you want me to become a beggar and beg for my food? Or do you want me to make a living as a thief wielding a base and violent sword on the highway? To live, I must do these things — I don’t know any other way to make my living. Yet I will not become either a beggar or a robber, no matter what. I prefer to subject myself to the malice of a bloodthirsty brother who does not treat me as a brother.”

“Don’t do that,” Adam said. “I have five hundred crowns, money that I thriftily saved from my wages while I worked for your father. I saved up this money to live on in my old age when my old limbs would lie lame and forgotten in some corner. Take this money. God, Who feeds the ravens and providently cares for the sparrow, will be my comfort in my old age! Here is the gold — all this I give to you. Let me be your servant and accompany you in your journey. Though I look old, I am still strong and healthy. In my youth I never drank alcohol and I never lived recklessly and shamefully in such a way that would make me weak and debilitated. Therefore, my old age is like a vigorous winter — it is frosty, but kindly. Therefore, let me go with you. I will do the service of a younger man in whatever needs to be done.”

Adam had studied Psalm 147:9 and Luke 12:6 and Luke 12:24:

Psalm 147:9: “He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.”

Luke 12:6: “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?”

Luke 12:24: “Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?”

Orlando replied, “Good old man, in you I see the faithful service of the ancient world. At that time, people worked out of a sense of duty and not only for money. You don’t follow the custom of these days when no one will work except for a promotion, and once they have the promotion, they stop working so hard. You are not like such people. But by serving me, you are pruning a rotten tree that cannot yield even a blossom in return for all your pains and husbandry. But come with me. We will travel together, and before we have spent your life savings, we will find a steady, sober, and humble way of life.”

“Master, lead, and I will follow you to the last gasp, with truth and loyalty. From when I was seventeen years old until now when I am almost fourscore years old, I have lived here, but now I will live here no more. When they are seventeen years old, many people seek their fortunes, but at fourscore years old it is far too late for me to do so. Still, my fate cannot be better than to die well and not in my master’s debt.”

Adam was a faithful steward. He served the right master and not the wrong master.

— 2.4 —

Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone were walking together. Rosalind, dressed like a young man, was going by the name Ganymede. Celia, dressed like a young peasant woman, was going by the name Aliena.

Rosalind said, “By Jupiter, how weary I am in spirit!”

“Ganymede, I would not care about my spirit, if my legs were not so weary,” Touchstone said.

Rosalind said, “I could disgrace my man’s clothing and cry like a woman, but I must comfort the weaker vessel because a man’s jacket and trousers ought to be more courageous than a petticoat; therefore, be courageous, good Aliena!”

“Please bear with me,” Celia said. “I cannot go any further.”

They stopped walking.

Touchstone said, “For my part, Aliena, I had rather bear with you than bear you — I do not want to carry you. Still, I should bear no cross if I did bear you because I think you have no Elizabethan coins bearing a cross as a decoration in your purse.”

Rosalind looked around and said, “Well, this is the Forest of Arden.”

“Now I am in the Forest of Arden,” Touchstone said. “Well, I am a bigger fool now than I was at home. When I was at home, I was in a better place; still, travellers have to be content with what they find.”

“That’s good advice, Touchstone,” Rosalind said. “Please take it.”

Corin, an old shepherd, and Silvius, a young shepherd who was in love with a young shepherdess named Phoebe, walked into the travelers’ sight and hearing.

Rosalind said, “Look, two men are coming here. They are a young man and an old man talking earnestly.”

Corin said to Silvius, “That is the way to make her scorn you always.”

“Corin, I wish that you knew how much I love her!”

“I can partly guess because I have been in love before.”

“No, Corin, you are old, and so you can not guess how much I love her — even if in your youth you were as true a lover as ever sighed upon a pillow at midnight as you thought about your love. If your love was ever like my love — but I am sure that no man ever loved any woman as much as I love Phoebe — then how many really ridiculous actions did you do because of your love?”

“They run into a thousand really ridiculous actions that I have forgotten.”

“Then you never did love as heartily as I love! Unless you remember even the slightest folly that love has made you commit, you have not loved. If you have never sat as I do now, wearying your hearer by constantly praising your loved one, you have not loved. If you have not run away from your friends abruptly, as my love now makes me do, you have not loved.”

Silvius ran away, crying the name of the woman he loved: “Phoebe! Phoebe! Phoebe!”

Rosalind watched him run away, and then she said, “Poor shepherd! After learning about your lovesickness, I now am feeling my own. You have probed your wound, and now I feel the pain of my wound.”

“And I am remembering my own lovesickness,” Touchstone said, satirizing being in love. “I remember that when I was in love I broke my sword on a stone and told him ‘Take that!’ for coming at night because of Jane Smile. Yes, I had to beat my genitalia each night because of Jane Smile. I remember kissing her wooden beater for washing clothes and kissing the cow’s udders that her pretty chapped hands had milked. I remember wooing a pea plant as a substitute for Jane Smile. I took two peascods from the plant and then I gave them back to the plant, weeping tears and saying, ‘Wear these for my sake.’ If Jane Smile were to accept a gift from me, that would mean that she was giving me permission to woo her. And if cods are testicles and peas are a piece, aka a penis, her wearing them would make me happy. And yes, every man needs a codpiece.”

Touchstone paused, and then added, “We who are true lovers do strange things, but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly. As all who love must die, so all who love must act foolishly. Love makes us do foolish things, but love also means that we are a part of the natural order.”

Rosalind said, “You are speaking wiser than you are aware of.”

“Aware or beware?” Touchstone asked. “I shall never beware of my own wit until I hurt my shins by banging up against it.”

“The lovesickness of this young shepherd is much like my own,” Rosalind said.

“And his lovesickness is like mine, but my lovesickness is growing stale,” Touchstone said.

Celia said, “Please, will one of you ask that man over there if he will sell us any food? I am faint from hunger and feel as if I am almost dying.”

Touchstone had little respect for rural countrymen; he regarded them all as hicks. He called to Corin, using an insulting term: “Hey, you clown!”

“By quiet, fool,” Rosalind said to Touchstone. “He is not your kinsman. He is not a professional fool.”

Corin replied, “Who is calling?”

Touchstone replied, “Your betters, sir.”

To himself, Corin said, “If they were not my betters, they would be very wretched indeed.”

To Touchstone, Rosalind said, “Be quiet.”

To Corin, Rosalind said, "Good evening to you, friend."

"And to you, gentle sir," Corin replied courteously, "and to you all."

"Please, shepherd," Rosalind said, "if either courtesy or money can in this deserted place buy hospitality, take us to a place where we may rest ourselves and eat. Here is a young maiden much exhausted by travel; she is fainting from hunger."

"Fair sir, I pity her and I wish, for her sake more than for my own, I was better able to relieve her than I am, but I am a shepherd who works for another man and I do not get the wool from the sheep I shear. The wool and profit belong to my master, who has a churlish disposition and cares little about finding his way to Heaven by doing deeds of hospitality. Besides, his cottage, his flocks, and his pastureland are now for sale, and at our cottage now, because my master is away, there is nothing for refined people to eat. But come and see for yourself what food is there. As for myself, I will make you very welcome there."

"Who is the person who is thinking of buying his flock and pasture?" Rosalind asked.

"That young lover whom you saw here but a moment ago, but he is only thinking about it. I don't expect him to make a real offer to buy them."

"Please, if you can do so ethically and without taking advantage of the young shepherd," Rosalind said, "buy for us the cottage, the flock, and the pastureland, and we will pay for them."

Celia added, "And we will increase your wages. I like this place, and I willingly could spend my time here."

Corin was willing to buy the place for them. He said, "Assuredly this place is to be sold. Come with me. If you like what you see of the land, the profit that can be made, and this kind of life, I will be your very faithful shepherd and buy it with your gold right away."

They followed Corin.

— 2.5 —

In another part of the Forest of Arden, Jaques and some other lords listened to Amiens sing this song:

*"Under the greenwood tree*

*"Whoever loves to lie with me,*

*"And turn his merry note*

*"Unto the sweet bird's throat,*

*"Come here, come here, come here.*

*"Here shall he see*

*"No enemy*

*"But winter and rough weather."*

The song celebrated the good parts of living in the Forest of Arden — love and singing and birdsong — while acknowledging the bad parts — winter and rough weather. In the Forest of Arden, the enemies are winter and rough weather. In the court, in contrast, the enemies can be much worse.

Jaques requested, “Sing more, more, please, more.”

“My singing more will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques. You will become sad.”

“So be it,” Jaques said. “I enjoy melancholy. Sing more, please, more. I can suck melancholy out of a song, just like a weasel sucks eggs. More, please, more.”

“My voice is ragged. I know I cannot please you.”

“I do not want you to please me. I want you to sing. Come, more — sing me another stanza. Do you call them stanzas?”

“Call them by whatever name you want, Jaques,” Amiens replied.

“No, I don’t care about their names — they are not written on an IOU, and so they owe me nothing. A list of names of sections of music is not very useful; a list of people who owe me money would be very useful indeed. Will you sing?”

“Yes, but I will sing more at your request than to please myself.”

“Well, then, if ever I thank any man, I will thank you. But what people call thanks nowadays is like the encounter of two dog-faced baboons, who bow to each other by rote and without meaning it. Whenever a man thanks me heartily, I feel as if I have given him a penny and he is thanking me with the overenthusiastic thanks a beggar uses to thank someone who gives him money. But come, Amiens, sing.”

To the other Lords, Jaques said, “All of you who will not be singing, please be quiet.”

“Well, I’ll finish singing the song,” Amiens said. “Sirs, finish the preparation of the meal for Duke Senior and us. Place a blanket on the ground. Duke Senior will drink under this tree.”

Amiens said to Jaques, “Duke Senior has spent all day looking for you.”

“And I have spent all day avoiding him,” Jaques replied. “He is too eager to debate me, in my opinion. I think of as many issues and topics as he does, but I just give Heaven thanks for my ideas — I do not feel that I need to show them off or boast about them. But, please, sing and warble.”

Amiens sang, “*Whoever shuns ambition —*”

Everyone joined in and sang with Amiens:

“*And loves to live in the Sunshine,*

“*Seeking the food he eats*

“*And pleased with what he gets,*

“*Come here, come here, come here.*

“*Here shall he see*

*“No enemy*

*“But winter and rough weather.”*

Jaques said, “Now let me sing some additional words to this song. I wrote these words yesterday although I do not have a lot of creativity.”

“And I’ll sing it,” Amiens said.

Jaques said, “It goes like this:

*“If it comes to pass*

*“That any man acts like an ass,*

*“Leaving his wealth and ease,*

*“A stubborn will to please,*

*“Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame:*

*“Here shall he see*

*“Fools as gross as he,*

*“If he will come to me.”*

The other Lords had moved closer to Jaques. They were in a circle around him.

“What does ‘ducdame’ mean?” Amiens asked.

Jaques replied, “It is a Greek — as in ‘It’s Greek to me’ — magic spell used to gather fools in a circular formation.”

He paused, and then said, “Well, I’ll take a nap. If I can’t go to sleep, I will find something else to do — I’ll rail against all the first-born of Egypt. Exodus 11:5 states, ‘And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.’ Exodus 12:29-30 states, ‘And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. During the night Pharaoh got up, he along with all his officials and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud wailing throughout Egypt because there wasn’t a house without someone dead.’ As for myself, I will rail against the first-born Duke Senior, who has had bad fortune and become a gypsy and led his followers — now also gypsies — into the wilderness. I will rail against him if I can’t sleep because if I cannot, it will be because his followers have woken me up so Duke Senior can talk to me.”

Amiens said, “I will find Duke Senior. The meal is prepared.”

— 2.6 —

Nor far from the place where the meal had been prepared for Duke Senior and his followers, Orlando and Adam were walking, exhausted and hungry.

Adam said to Orlando, “Dear master, I can go no further. I am dying of hunger. I will lie down here, and my grave will be here. Farewell, kind master.”

Orlando replied, “You must have more courage now. Live a little longer; be comforted a little; cheer yourself up a little. If this wild and uncultivated forest has anything savage in it, I will either be food for it or kill it and bring it here as food for you. Your imagination is making you think that you are closer to dying than you really are. For my sake, be comforted. Hold off death awhile and keep death at arm’s length. I will return here and be with you soon, and if I don’t bring you something to eat, I will give you permission to die, but if you die before I return, you will have mocked my efforts.”

Adam nodded and Orlando said, “Well done! You look more cheerful, and I will return to you quickly. Yet you are lying in the cold air. I will carry you to some shelter. You will not die for lack of a dinner, if anything lives in this lonely forest. Be of good cheer, good Adam!”

— 2.7 —

Amiens had arrived with Duke Senior at the place where the meal was waiting. Jaques was out of sight.

“I have been searching for Jaques,” Duke Senior said. “I think that he must be transformed into a beast because I can find the man nowhere.”

A Lord said, “My Lord, he was here a moment ago. He was happy and playful, and he was listening to a song.”

“Are you really talking about Jaques, the melancholy man?” Duke Senior asked. “If he, who is full of melancholy and of discords, becomes musical, very soon the music made by the spheres as they move in the sky will become discordant. Go and find him. I want to talk to him.”

Jaques walked up to the group, and the Lord said, “He has saved me the trouble of finding him. Here he comes.”

“How are you, monsieur?” Duke Senior said. “What kind of a life is this when your poor friends must seek you and beg for your company? Why, you look happy!”

Jaques was happy; he had met Touchstone, who had been wearing the motley costume that identified him as a professional fool. The cottage that Rosalind and Celia had bought was near Duke Senior’s camp.

He said, “A fool, a fool! I met a fool in the forest, a motley fool — a fool wearing motley! It is a miserable world in which your friends must seek you and beg for your company, but as I do live by eating food, I met a fool who lay down and warmed himself in the Sunshine, and he criticized Lady Fortune with carefully chosen words and with rhetorical eloquence, and yet he was a motley fool.

“I said to him, ‘Good day, fool,’ but he replied to me, ‘No, sir, fortune favors fools, so do not call me a fool until Heaven has sent me good fortune.’

“And then the fool took a watch from his pouch, and looking on it with lackluster eye, said very wisely, ‘It is ten o’clock. Thus we may see how the world goes. It is but an hour ago since it was nine, and after one hour more it will be eleven. And so, from hour to hour, we grow

riper and riper — more mature and more mature — and then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot, and thereby hangs a moral tale.”

Jaques thought, *If instead of using the word “hour,” the fool had used the word “whore,” he would have said, “And so, from whore to whore, we rut and rut, and then, from whore to whore, we rot and rot with venereal disease, and thereby hangs an anatomical tail.” The anatomical tail, of course, would be a penis.*

Jaques continued, “When I heard the motley fool thus moralize on the times, my lungs began to crow like the rooster named Chanticleer in Chaucer’s ‘Nun’s Priest’s Tale.’ I was impressed that fools should be so deeply contemplative, and I laughed without intermission for an hour by his watch. What a noble fool! What a worthy fool! Motley is the only clothing to wear.”

“Which fool are you talking about?” Duke Senior asked.

“He is a worthy fool!” Jaques said. “He has been a courtier at court, and he says that if ladies are young and beautiful, they always know it, and his brain, which is as dry as the left-over biscuit that remains after a long sea voyage, is crammed with strange topics and observations, which he utters in mangled forms and with dry wit. I wish I were a fool! My ambition is to wear a motley coat.”

“You shall have one,” Duke Senior said.

“It is my only suit — my only request to you and the only outfit I will need to wear,” Jaques said, “provided that you get rid of any thoughts that I am wise. Such thoughts are rank and need to be weeded. I must have the freedom — a license as free as the wind — to blow my criticisms on whomever I please. That is the job of fools. Those people who are most galled with my satiric criticisms must laugh the hardest. Why, sir, must they laugh so hard? The ‘why’ is as plain as the way to the parish church: He whom a fool does very wisely hit with criticism will act wisely, although he is hurt by the criticism, to appear not to be hurt by the criticism. They will act foolishly if they allow their hurt to show. Wise men will appear not to smart from the satiric criticism, although they do in fact smart. Unless a man appears to appreciate the jokes, other people will think that the jokes were aimed at him, and the wise man’s folly will be laid bare by the random satirical hits of the motley fool. So give me a motley costume and permission to speak my mind, and I will use satire to thoroughly cleanse the foulness from throughout the infected world if people will patiently receive my medicine.”

“Don’t be silly!” Duke Senior said. “I can tell you what you would do.”

Jaques replied, “For less than two cents, tell me your thoughts.”

“You would commit a most mischievous foul sin when you would chide the sins of other people,” Duke Senior said. “An old proverb says, ‘He finds fault with others and does worse himself.’ You yourself have been a libertine. You have been as sensual as the brutish sting of animal lust itself. All the swollen sores and evils that have come to a head like boils, that you with your freedom and immorality have caught, you would vomit into the whole world.”

Jaques ignored Duke Senior’s criticism of his past and returned to his defense of satire: “How can anyone who denounces pride in general be said to have denounced any person in particular? Pride is as huge as the sea, and trying to indulge one’s pride uses up all the resources available. What particular woman in the city do I name when I say that the women of the city bear the cost of princes on their unworthy shoulders by spending too much on

expensive clothing as they try to appear to be of a higher class than they are? Who can come in and say that I mean her, when both she and her neighbor are doing exactly the same thing? Or what about a person who thinks that I am criticizing him in particular? He has a lowly job but dresses in expensive clothing — suppose he tells me that I don't pay for his expensive clothing and therefore it is of no concern to me. How can he say that without admitting that my criticism of him is true? What about that? How have my words hurt him? If my criticism is just, then he deserves the criticism. If he does not deserve the criticism and is free of sin, then my criticism will fly past him like a wild goose and will not harm him."

Jaques heard a noise, looked around, and said, "But look, someone is coming."

With his sword drawn, Orlando walked toward the group.

Orlando ordered, "Stop, and eat no more."

"Why, I have eaten nothing yet," Jaques said.

"Nor shall you, until those who most need the food have eaten," Orlando said.

"What cocky young man is this?" Jaques asked.

Duke Senior asked Orlando, "What makes you so rude and so bold, man? Are you in distress, or do you simply hate good manners?"

"I am in distress," Orlando replied. "The thorny point of bare distress has taken away from me the use of smooth good manners and civility. However, I was brought up in civilized society and I have had some good breeding. But again, I say, don't eat anything. Anyone who touches any of this fruit will die — they must wait to eat until I and my needs have been satisfied."

Jaques said, "If you will not be answered with reasons, I must die. But if reasons are not sufficient, perhaps raisins will be. Raisins make up part of our meal."

"What do you want?" Duke Senior said to Orlando. "Your gentleness shall force us more to help you than your force shall move us to gentleness. If you are polite, that will persuade us more quickly to give you what you need than your threatening us will persuade us to give you what you need."

"I am close to dying of hunger; therefore, let me have food," Orlando said.

"Sit down and eat, and welcome to our meal," Duke Senior replied.

"You are speaking to me very gently and hospitably," Orlando said, sheathing his sword. "Pardon me, please. I thought that all things were savage here, and therefore I have acted like a savage. But whoever you are in this hard-to-reach lonely place, who sit under the shade of melancholy boughs and forget and neglect the creeping hours of time, if ever you have looked on better days, if you have ever been where bells have knolled to alert people to go to church, if you have ever sat at any good man's feast, if ever from your eyelids you have wiped a tear and know what it is to pity and be pitied, then let my kindness and nobility persuade you that I am civilized. Now I blush with shame, and I put away my sword."

"It is true that we have seen better days," Duke Senior said, "and we have heard the holy bell knoll to tell us to go to church and we have sat at good men's feasts and wiped our eyes of

tears that sacred pity has caused. Therefore, welcome and sit down and take whatever you desire to satisfy your needs.”

“For a little while longer, then, refrain from eating,” Orlando said. “Wait while I, like a doe, go to find my fawn so I can bring it here and give it food. Nearby is an old poor man, who with me has many weary steps limped in pure love. Until that man — who is oppressed with the two evils of age and hunger — has eaten, I will not touch a bite.”

“Go and bring him here,” Duke Senior said. “We will not eat until you return.”

“Thank you,” Orlando said. “May God bless you for your hospitality.”

Orlando left to get Adam.

Duke Senior said to Jaques, “You can see that we are not the only ones who are unhappy: This wide and universal theater known as the world presents more woeful pageants than the scene in which we play our parts.”

Jaques replied, “All the world is a stage, and all the men and women in it are merely actors: They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his lifetime plays many parts. His parts are for seven ages.

“First, he plays the infant, mewling and puking in the wet nurse’s arms.

“Second, he plays the whining schoolboy with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like a snail as he unwillingly goes to school.

“Third, he plays the lover, sighing like a furnace breathing out smoke and singing a woeful ballad about his girlfriend’s eyebrows.

“Fourth, he plays the soldier, full of strange oaths and bearded like the leopard, fiercely protective of his honor, impetuous and quick in quarrel, facing the mouth of a cannon as he seeks fame, which lasts no longer than a bubble.

“Fifth, he plays the judge, with a fair round belly stuffed with tasty chicken, the bribe of choice, and he plays the part with wise sayings and clichéd examples.

“Sixth, he plays an old man — the lean and slippered and ridiculous pantaloons — wearing spectacles on his nose and a moneybag at his side. The carefully preserved pants that he wore as a young man are now a world too wide for his shrunken legs, and his big manly voice, regressing to a childish treble, squeaks and whistles as he speaks.

“Seventh, and last, he plays the really old man — the part that will end his history — in his second childhood in utter forgetfulness, without teeth, without eyes, without taste, smell, or enjoyment, without everything.”

Orlando now returned. He was carrying Adam, an old man of much virtue and loyalty and generosity.

Duke Senior said to Orlando, “Welcome. Set down your venerable burden, and let him eat.”

“I thank you most for him,” Orlando said.

Adam said weakly to Orlando, “There is need for you to thank him.”

He said to Duke Senior, "I scarcely can speak to thank you for myself."

"Welcome," Duke Senior said again. "Fall to. Eat. I will not trouble you now with questions about your fortunes."

He ordered, "Give us some music, and, good Amiens, sing."

Amiens sang, "*Blow, blow, you winter wind.*

*"You are not as unkind*

*"As man's ingratitude;*

*"Your tooth is not as keen,*

*"Because you are not seen,*

*"Although your breath is cruel.*

*"Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho to the green holly.*

*"Most friendship is feigning, most loving is mere folly.*

*"So sing heigh-ho to the holly!*

*"This life is most jolly.*

*"Freeze, freeze, you bitter sky,*

*"That does not bite as deeply*

*"As forgotten favors.*

*"Though you turn waters to ice,*

*"Your sting is not so sharp*

*"As the pain of a friend who has forgotten you.*

*"Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho to the green holly.*

*"Most friendship is feigning, most loving is mere folly.*

*"So sing heigh-ho to the holly!*

*"This life is most jolly."*

Suffering can be physical or mental. The mental suffering caused by man's ingratitude is worse than the physical suffering caused by a cold winter wind.

As Amiens sang, Adam and Orlando ate. Orlando also whispered to Duke Senior, who now said, "If you are really the good Sir Rowland's son, as you have whispered to me that you are, and as I can see a strong resemblance to him depicted and living in your face, then be truly welcome here. I am Duke Senior, and I truly respected your father. We will now go into my cave and you can tell me the rest of your story."

To Adam, he said, "Good old man, you are as welcome as your master is."

To Orlando, he said, "Support him by the arm."

To Adam, he said, "Give me your hand."

To both Orlando and Adam, he said, "Now I want to hear about your histories and adventures."

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

In a room of his palace, Duke Frederick was questioning Oliver. Some other Lords were present.

Duke Frederick said to Oliver, “You have not seen him since the wrestling match? Sir, sir, that is not possible. If I were not for the most part made of mercy, I would not seek Orlando since I have you here to take the brunt of my revenge. But note well: Find your brother, wherever he is. Seek him diligently, with candle if need be, like the parable in Luke 15:8-10 about the woman who lost a silver coin, lit a candle, and searched for the coin until she found it. Bring your brother back here dead or alive within the next twelve months, or return no more to seek a living in our territory. All of your lands and all of the things worth seizure that you call yours we now seize into our hands. We will keep them until you return with your brother and use his testimony to acquit yourself of the crimes of which we think you are guilty.”

“I wish that your highness knew my thoughts and feelings,” Oliver said. “I have never loved my brother in my life.”

“Then you are even more of a villain than I thought,” Duke Frederick said, ignoring the way that he had treated his own brother: Duke Senior.

To the others, he said, “Throw Oliver out of the palace; my officers will seize his house and lands. Do this quickly and send him on his way.”

### — 3.2 —

In the Forest of Arden, Orlando hung a love poem on a tree and said, “Hang there, my verse, as a witness of my love, and you, thrice-crowned goddess and queen of night — crowned once as the Moon goddess Luna, a second time as Diana on Earth, and a third time as Proserpina, aka Persephone, in the Underworld — look with your chaste eye, from your pale sphere above, upon Rosalind, who is a virgin like yourself. Because she is a virgin, she is one of your followers. She, your follower, rules my life. Rosalind! These trees shall be my books and in their bark I will write my thoughts so that every eye that looks in this forest shall see testaments to your excellence everywhere. Run, run, Orlando — carve on every tree testaments to the beautiful, virginal, and indescribable she.”

Orlando ran.

Nearby, the old shepherd Corin and the professional jester Touchstone were talking.

Corin asked Touchstone, “And how do you like this shepherd’s life, Mr. Touchstone?”

“Truly, shepherd, in itself, it is a good life, but because it is a shepherd’s life, it is a bad life. Because it is solitary, I like it very well; but because it is lonely, I don’t like it at all. Now, because it is in the fields, it pleases me well; but because it is not in the court, it is boring and does not please me. Because it is a simple life, it suits me well, but because there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach and does not suit me. Do you have any philosophy in you, shepherd?”

“No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is,” Corin said, “and I know that a man who lacks money, resources, and happiness is without three good friends. I know that the property of rain is to be wet and the property of fire is to burn, that good pasture makes fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is lack of the Sun, and that a man who has acquired no intelligence either by birth or education may complain that he lacks a good upbringing or that he comes from a stupid family.”

“Such a man as yourself is a natural philosopher,” Touchstone said. “Have you ever been at court, shepherd?”

“No, indeed.”

“Then you are damned,” Touchstone said.

“I hope not.”

Touchstone was joking, as jesters so often do, and Corin knew it.

“Indeed, you are damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.”

Corin knew about roasting eggs in ashes. They needed to be turned, or they would roast only on one side.

“I am damned like an ill-roasted egg for not being at court? Explain why you think that.”

“If you have never been at court, then you have never seen good manners. If you have never seen good manners, then your manners are wicked. Wickedness is sin, and sin results in damnation. You are in a dangerous position, shepherd.”

“Not at all, Touchstone,” Corin replied. “The good manners that are suitable for the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behavior of the country folk is most mockable at the court. You told me that you do not greet each other at the court without kissing each other’s hands. That custom would be unhygienic, if courtiers were shepherds.”

“Explain your reasoning. Quickly, explain your reasoning.”

“We are always handling our ewes, and their fleeces, as you know, are greasy.”

“Why, the hands of courtiers also sweat. The grease of an ewe is as wholesome as the sweat of a man. You have not made a good argument. Therefore, make a better one.”

“In addition to that, our hands are hard.”

“Your lips will feel them the sooner when you kiss them, and so you do not need kiss very long. Come up with a better argument.”

“We use tar when treating the injuries of our sheep, and so tar is often on our hands. Would you have us kiss tar? In contrast, the hands of the courtier are perfumed.”

“You shallow thinker! Compared to a good steak, you are a piece of flesh covered with maggots. Learn of the wise, and perpend. Perfume has a base of civet, which is the secretion from the anal glands of a civet cat. Tar is a cleaner substance than civet. Can you come up with a better argument?”

“You have too courtly a wit for me. I give up.”

“Will you give up, still damned?” Touchstone joked. “God help you, shallow man! May God make an incision in you and let the bad blood and damnation out. You are ill.”

“Sir, I am a trustworthy laborer,” Corin said. “I earn what I eat, earn what I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man’s happiness, am glad of other men’s good luck and lives, resigned to any afflictions I face, and my greatest pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.”

“That is another foolish sin in you: you bring the ewes and the rams together and attempt to get your living by the copulation of animals. You act as a pimp to the leading sheep of the flock and you betray a she-lamb only a year old by breeding her to a crooked-horned, old, possessed-of-an-unfaithful-ewe ram — that is an unreasonable and unethical match of female and male. If you are not damned for this, the Devil himself will not allow such evil beings as shepherds to enter his Hell — I cannot see any other way that you can escape Hell.”

Corin said to Touchstone, “Look, here comes young Master Ganymede, the brother of my new female employer, Aliena.”

Rosalind walked toward them. She was reading one of the love poems that Orlando had tied to trees.

Rosalind read out loud this poem:

*“From the East Indies to the West Indies,*

*“There is no jewel like Rosalind.*

*“Her worth, being mounted on the wind,*

*“Through all the world bears Rosalind.*

*“All the pictures fairest sketched and lined*

*“Are but black compared to Rosalind.*

*“Let no fair be kept in mind*

*“But the fair face of Rosalind.”*

Touchstone knew that this was bad poetry. He said to Rosalind, who as usual was dressed in men’s clothing and going by the name Ganymede, “Writing good poetry is difficult; writing bad poetry is easy. I can rhyme you poetry like that for eight years without stopping, except for dinners and suppers and sleeping-hours. That kind of poetry jogs along like dairy women bumpily riding to the market.”

Bad poetry or not, it was love poetry about her, so Rosalind said, “Be quiet, fool!”

Touchstone was not quiet. He said, “Here’s an example of the bad poetry I will write:

*“If a male deer — a hart — do lack a female deer — a hind,*

*“Let him seek out Rosalind.*

*“If the cat will seek its own kind,*

*“So be sure will Rosalind.*

*“Winter garments must be stuffed with padding — that is, lined,*

*“And stuffed must be slender Rosalind.*

*“They who reap must make sheaves and them bind;*

*“Then put them on a cart with Rosalind.”*

Rosalind smiled. She knew that prostitutes were placed on a cart to be taken to prison. She also knew what kind of stuffing of a young woman Touchstone was referring to.

Touchstone continued his bad poetry:

*“The sweetest nut has the sourest rind,*

*“Such a nut is Rosalind.*

*“He that sweetest rose will find*

*“Must find love’s prick and so will Rosalind.”*

Rosalind smiled again. She knew that “prick” had a double meaning.

Touchstone said about the bad poetry that Rosalind had been reading, “This is the very false gallop of unmetrical verses. Why do you infect yourself with them?”

“Be quiet, you dull fool! I found them on a tree.”

“Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.”

“I will graft the tree with you, and then I will graft it with a medlar branch. Then the tree will bear the earliest fruit in the country — you will be rotten before you are half ripe, and that is the true quality of the medlar. The medlar is not ripe enough to eat until it is rotten. This is an appropriate comparison because you are a meddler.”

“You have spoken, but whether you have spoken wisely, we will let the forest judge.”

Celia had found one of the poems that Orlando had written and then tied to a tree. She walked toward Rosalind and Touchstone. She did not see them because her eyes looked down as she read the poem.

Rosalind said, “Be quiet, Touchstone!”

Keeping in character as Ganymede, a wise thing to do to prevent mistakes that could reveal her secret identity, she said, “Here comes my sister, reading. Let’s stand aside and spy on her.”

Celia read out loud, *“Why should this a desert be?*

*“Because it is unpeopled? No:*

*“Tongues I’ll hang on every tree,*

*“That shall civil sayings show:*

*“Some, how brief the life of man*

*“Runs his erring pilgrimage,*

*“That the stretching of the span of a hand  
Limits his sum of age;  
Some, of violated vows  
Between the souls of friend and friend:  
But upon the fairest boughs,  
Or at every sentence’s end,  
Will I ‘Rosalinda’ write,  
Teaching all who read to know  
The quintessence of every soul  
Heaven would in miniature show.  
Therefore Heaven Nature charged  
That one body should be filled  
With all graces wide-enlarged:  
Nature presently distilled  
Helen’s cheek, but not her heart,  
Cleopatra’s majesty,  
Atalanta’s better part,  
Sad Lucretia’s modesty.  
Thus Rosalind of many parts  
By Heavenly council was devised,  
Of many faces, eyes, and hearts,  
To have the features dearest prized.  
Heaven decreed that she these gifts should have,  
And I to live and die her slave.”*

The poem may have been badly written, but it was complimentary to Rosalind: Heavenly beings had conspired to give her the best qualities of ancient heroines. According to the author of the poem, the Heavenly beings had given Rosalind the beauty of Helen of Troy but not her character — Helen had deserted her daughter and husband and had run away with Paris, Prince of Troy.

The Heavenly beings also had given Rosalind the majesty of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.

The Heavenly beings also had given Rosalind the “better part” of Atalanta, who wished to preserve her chastity. Being swift, she challenged her suitors to a foot race. If she won the foot

race, she would remain unmarried. If a suitor won the footrace, she would marry that suitor. For a long time, she remained a virgin, but Venus, the goddess of sexual passion, helped Hippomenes to win the foot race. She gave him three golden apples, and during the foot race, he dropped the golden apples, one at a time. Atalanta picked up the golden apples, and this slowed her down enough that Hippomenes won the race and married her. Fortunately, Rosalind did not get the worse part of Atalanta: her cruelty. All the suitors who lost the footrace were killed.

The Heavenly beings also had given Rosalind the modesty of Lucretia, who committed suicide after being raped by Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the Etruscan King: Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. The Romans then threw out the Etruscan King and started the Roman Republic.

Rosalind and Touchstone now came out of hiding. Rosalind startled Celia by exclaiming, “Oh, preacher. With what tedious homilies about love have you been wearing out your parishioners? You should have warned them in advance: ‘You will need great patience to listen to this!’”

“You are false friends for spying on me,” Celia joked. Then she said to Corin, “Shepherd, go away a little so that we can have some privacy.”

Because she wanted to engage in girl talk with Rosalind, she said to Touchstone, “Go with him.”

Touchstone said, “Come, shepherd, let us make an honorable retreat. We may not be with bag and baggage, yet we will have my scrip — my pouch — and scrippage — the coins I put in it.”

As Corin and Touchstone walked away, both Rosalind and Celia smiled. They knew that “bag and baggage” referred to the military equipment that could be taken away by soldiers as they retreated. They also knew that “bag and baggage” were less-than-complimentary terms when applied to women. A “bag” is an unattractive or elderly woman. “Baggage” is a woman of immoral life — a strumpet. “Baggage” can also be used playfully to describe a cunning or saucy young woman. They also knew that professional jesters have the freedom to use such terms. In return, the jesters’ victims were allowed to freely call the jester a fool, a term that was not exactly an insult.

Celia asked Rosalind, “Did you hear these verses?”

“Oh, yes, I heard them all, and more, too; for some of the verses had more feet than the verses could bear or carry.”

“That doesn’t matter. The feet should bear the verses.”

“True, but these feet were lame and could not bear themselves outside the verse and therefore stood lamely in the verse.”

Celia asked, “Did you hear these poems without wondering how it came to pass that your name is written in the bark of trees and poems about you are hung in the trees?”

“If this is a nine-days’-wonder, I had experienced seven of the nine days before you came here just now. Look at this poem: I found it on a palm-tree. I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras’ time, when I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember. Pythagoras thought that souls could be reincarnated in the bodies of animals, and the Irish thought that they could rid themselves of rats with the use of rhyming incantations.”

“Can you guess who wrote these poems and carved your name into the bark of trees?”

“Is it a man?” Rosalind joked.

“Yes, and he wears a necklace around his neck — a necklace that you once gave him.”

Celia asked, “Are you blushing?”

Rosalind knew that the man had to be Orlando, but she wanted Celia to say his name.

“Please tell me. What is the man’s name?”

“Lord, it is difficult for friends to meet, but mountains can be moved by earthquakes and so meet. This is true even though people usually think that friends may meet, but mountains never greet. You already know the answer, don’t you?”

“No,” Rosalind lied. “Who is it?”

“Is it possible that you don’t know?”

“I don’t know. Please, I urgently ask you to tell me who he is who wrote the poems.”

“Oh, wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful — and yet again wonderful, and after that, wonderful beyond all words!”

“Celia, please! Do you think that because I am dressed like a man that I am a man in my disposition! One inch of delay more is like the distance it would take to journey to the South Seas on an expedition of discovery. Please, tell me immediately what I want to know! Who wrote those poems! Speak up, and speak up quickly! I wish that you could stammer, so that you could pour this mystery man out of your mouth the way that wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle: either too much at once, or none at all. These, of course, alternate, and I would eventually learn the name that I want to know. Please, take the cork out of your mouth so that I can drink your news. Stop teasing me, and pour out the name that I want to know.”

“You want to know the name so that you can put a man in your belly.”

Rosalind thought, *Celia is referring either to my being pregnant with a son or to the act that could result in my being pregnant with a son. But yes, I want her to name the name of Orlando, whom I want to father my children.*

She asked, “Is he a normal man and made by God? What manner of man is he? Is his head worth a hat? Is his chin worth a beard?”

“He has only a little beard.”

“Well, God will send him more beard, if the man will be thankful. I can wait for the growth of his beard if you will now tell me on whose chin it will grow.”

Finally, Celia stopped teasing Rosalind and gave her the answer that she had hoped and expected to hear: “It is young Orlando, who conquered the wrestler and your heart both in an instant.”

Happy, Rosalind said, “May the Devil take you if you are lying. Speak truthfully, serious and honest maiden.”

“Truly, he is Orlando.”

“Orlando?”

“Orlando.”

Rosalind was delighted, but she was in disguise and dressed as a young man — something that could interfere with Orlando’s wooing of her. She said, “What shall I do with my man’s jacket and trousers?”

She then inundated Celia with questions: “What was he doing when you saw him? What did he say? How did he look? How was he dressed? What is he doing here? Did he ask about me? Where is he now? What happened when he departed from you? And when shall you see him again? Answer me in one word.”

“To answer all those questions in one word, I would need the large mouth of Rabelais’ comic creation: the giant Gargantua. Such a quantity of all-run-together syllables is too large for any normal-sized mouth. To say yes and no to your questions is more time-consuming than to answer the questions of a religious catechism.”

“Does Orlando know that I am in this forest and that I am wearing men’s clothing? Does he look as healthy as he did the day he wrestled?”

“Counting the specks of dust in a ray of Sunshine is as easy as answering the questions of a lover, but I will tell you where I saw him. Pay attention. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.”

“The oak is known as the tree of Jupiter, as well it should be known, since it drops such fruit.”

“Please listen, good madam.”

“Proceed.”

“There he lay, stretched along the ground, like a wounded knight.”

“Though it would be a pity to see such a sight, such a figure well becomes the ground.”

“Cry ‘whoa!’ to your tongue, please. It prances along in an ill-timed manner. He was dressed and equipped like a hunter hunting a male deer: a hart.”

“This is ominous,” Rosalind said. “He comes here to kill my heart.”

“I would like to sing my song without accompaniment. You are making me sing out of tune.”

“Don’t you know that I am a woman? What I think, I must speak. Sweetie, speak on.”

“You are making me forget which words to use — but look! Isn’t that him coming this way?”

Rosalind looked up and saw Orlando and Jaques walking together. She said, “Yes, it is him. Let us hide and spy on him.”

Orlando and Jaques had met in the forest. Now they were humorously and courteously insulting each other.

“I thank you for your company,” Jaques said, “but, to be honest, I would have preferred to be alone.”

“As had I,” Orlando replied, “but, because it is good manners, I also thank you for your company.”

“May God be with you, and may the two of us meet as seldom as we can.”

“I do desire that we may become better strangers.”

“Please, mar no more trees by writing names on their bark and hanging love poems from their branches.”

“Please, mar no more of my verses by reading them badly.”

“Is Rosalind your love’s name?”

“Yes, exactly.”

“I do not like her name.”

“There was no thought of pleasing you when she was given a Christian name at her baptism.”

“How tall is she?”

“She stands just as high as my heart.”

“You are full of pretty answers. You must know some goldsmiths’ wives — you must have learned your pretty answers by memorizing the inscriptions on the inside of rings.”

Jaques thought, “*She stands just as high as my heart.*” *Good grief!*

“That is not so,” Orlando said, “but I am answering your questions, which you seem to have learned from those on inspirational and religious posters.”

“You have a nimble wit. I think it was made from the swift heels of the swift runner Atalanta. Will you sit down with me? We two shall rail against our mistress the world and all our misery.”

“I will criticize no living person in the world but myself, whose faults I know best.”

“The worst fault you have is being in love,” Jaques said.

“It is a fault that I will not exchange for your best virtue. I am weary of you.”

“To tell the truth, I was looking for a fool when I found you.”

“He is drowned in the brook. Look in the brook, and you shall see him.”

“There I shall see my own reflection.”

“In my opinion, that which would be reflected is either a fool or nothing.”

“I will stay no more with you. Farewell, Mr. Love.”

“I am glad that you are leaving. Adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.”

Jaques walked away, and Rosalind whispered to Celia, “I will speak to Orlando like a saucy lackey and trick him while I pretend to be a young man.”

Rosalind said to Orlando, “How are you, forester?”

“Very well. What do you want?”

“Please, what o’clock is it?”

“You should ask me about the time of day in more general terms — there is no clock in the forest and so I can’t be specific.”

“Then there is no true lover in the forest,” Rosalind, dressed as Ganymede, said. “If there were a true lover in the forest, we would be able to tell the exact time by counting the number of the lover’s sighs per minute and the number of the lover’s groans per hour. That would tell the lazy passage of Time.”

“Why not the swift passage of Time? Wouldn’t the lover’s sighs and groans tell that?”

“Not at all, sir,” Rosalind replied. “Time passes differently for different kinds of people. For some people, Time ambles pleasurably. For some people, Time trots hard. For some people, Time gallops quickly. For some people, Time stands still.”

“For whom does Time trot hard?”

“Time trots hard and violently for a young maiden between the day of her engagement and the day of her marriage. Even if that time is a week, time trots so hard that it seems like seven years.”

“For whom does Time amble pleasurably?”

“Time ambles pleasurably for a priest who does not know Latin and a rich man who does not have the gout. The priest sleeps easily because he cannot study the Bible and other religious works, all of which are in the language of the learned: Latin. Therefore, he lacks the burden of hard study that makes him waste away. The rich man lives merrily because he feels no pain and knows no burden of heavy and painful poverty. For these men, Time ambles pleasurably.”

“For whom does Time gallop quickly?”

“Time gallops quickly for a thief on his way to the gallows. Although he goes as slowly as he can, he thinks that he gets there too quickly.”

“For whom does Time stand still?”

“Time stands still for lawyers during the period when the law courts are not in session. The lawyers sleep and do not see Time passing.”

“Where do you live, pretty youth?” Orlando asked.

“I live with this shepherdess, my sister, here in the outskirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.”

“Were you born here?”

“Yes, just like a rabbit that lives where it was born.”

“Your speech is more citified than it should be in so remote a dwelling.”

“I have been told that by many people,” Rosalind replied, “but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak; in his youth, he lived in a city. I am citified enough to be interested in

what o'clock it is. He understood courtship too well because in the city he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God that I am not a woman who is afflicted with all the many giddy offences of which he says women are guilty."

"Can you remember any of the principal evils that he claimed that women are guilty of?"

"There were none that really stood out. They were all similar to one another the way that halfpence, which have similar markings, are. Every fault seemed monstrous until its fellow fault came to match it."

"Please, tell me about some of them."

"No, I will not give away my medicine to anyone except those who are sick. There is a man who haunts the forest, who abuses our young trees by carving 'Rosalind' on their bark. He hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies upon brambles. All of these deify the name of Rosalind. If I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the sickness of love upon him."

"I am he who is so shaken by lovesickness. Please tell me your remedy for my lovesickness."

"You have none of the marks of lovesickness that my uncle taught me. He taught me how to know when a man is in love. I am sure that you are not a prisoner in that flimsy cage of rushes. You are not a prisoner of love."

"What are the marks of lovesickness that your uncle taught you?"

"They were a lean cheek, which you have not; dark circles under the eyes, which you have not; an impatient spirit, which you have not; a neglected beard, which you have not, but I pardon you for that because you have little beard — your beard is as big as a younger brother's revenue. Other marks were that your stockings should be ungartered, your hat should be without a band, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoes untied, and everything about you demonstrating a desperate neglect of how you are dressed. But you are no such man: You are meticulous in your apparel, and you seem to love yourself more than you love someone else."

"Fair youth, I wish I could make you believe that I am in love."

"Make me believe it! You may sooner make the woman whom you love believe it. I think that she is apter to believe than to admit that she does believe it. That is one of the ways in which women lie about their real feelings. But are you truly the man who hangs the verses on the trees — the verses wherein Rosalind is so praised and admired?"

"I swear to you, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that man, that unfortunate man."

"But are you as much in love as your rhymes say that you are?"

"Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much I am in love with Rosalind."

"Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you, lovers deserve to be treated the way that madmen are — kept in a dark house and whipped to get the demon that causes their madness out of them. The reason that lovers are not punished in that way and cured of their lovesickness is that the madness is so common that the whippers are in love, too. Yet I am an expert in curing lovesickness through my advice."

"Have you ever cured anyone of lovesickness?"

“Yes, one person, and in this manner. He pretended that I was his loved one, and I made him pretend everyday to woo me, at which time I would, being but a Moonish — that is, changeable and fickle — youth myself, be sad, effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, capricious, affected, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, and full of smiles. I acted as if I felt every emotion or as if I felt no emotion. I acted one way, and then I acted the opposite way. Both boys and women are for the most part creatures of this color: changeable and fickle. I would like him, and then I would loathe him. I would entertain him, and then I would forswear him. I would weep for him, and then I would spit at him. By acting in this way, I drove lovesickness out of my suitor and I delivered to him another kind of madness: He renounced the world, and he decided to live in complete religious seclusion. In this way, I cured him, and I am willing to cure you in the same way — I will wash your heart and make it as clean as a sound sheep’s heart — there will not be one spot of love in your heart.”

“I don’t want to be cured of my lovesickness, youth.”

“I will cure you, if you will call me Rosalind and come everyday to my cottage and woo me.”

“I have such faith in my love for Rosalind that I accept your challenge — you will not be able to cure me of my love for her,” Orlando said. “Now tell me where your cottage is.”

“Come with me and I will show you where it is. While we walk, you can tell me where in the forest you live. Will you come with me?”

“With all my heart, good youth.”

“You must call me Rosalind.”

She asked Celia, “Come, sister, will you go with us?”

Rosalind thought, *My meetings with Orlando will work out well. He needs to talk to me, not write poetry about me.*

### — 3.3 —

In another part of the forest, Touchstone was talking to Audrey, a goatherd. Jaques was close enough to them to overhear what they said.

“Come quickly, good Audrey. I will help you with your goats, Audrey. And what do you think, Audrey? Am I the man for you? Do the simple features of my face content you?”

“Your features!” Audrey said. “Lord help us! What features!”

“I am here with you and your goats, just like the most capricious of the Roman poets, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.”

Touchstone knew that Audrey had never heard of Ovid, author of *Metamorphoses*.

Jaques enjoyed watching Touchstone court Audrey: A well-educated man was courting an ill-educated young woman. Jaques said to himself, “Touchstone’s knowledge is being put to ill use. His company cannot appreciate his intelligence and education. This is worse than the god Jupiter coming down from Mount Olympus to spend time as the guest of peasants in a thatched cottage.”

Touchstone said, “When a man’s verses cannot be understood, and when a man’s good jokes are not understood, it metaphorically kills a man just like an argument over a big bill for a short visit in a small room. But I doubt that forest-dwelling people have heard that the great playwright Christopher Marlowe was killed in an argument about a big bill. Truly, Audrey, I wish that the gods had made you poetical.”

“I do not know what the word ‘poetical’ means. Does it mean being respectable in deed and word? Does it mean being truthful?”

“No, indeed. The truest poetry is the most feigning — the most imaginative. Lovers are fond of poetry, and what lovers swear in poetry may be said to be lies.”

“Do you wish then that the gods had made me poetical?”

“I do, truly. You have sworn to me that you are chaste. If you were a poet, I could hope that you were lying.”

“Don’t you want me to be chaste?” Audrey asked.

“No, indeed, unless you were ugly. Chastity and beauty are like honey and sugar — two things that when they go together are too sweet. No one needs to pour honey on sugar.”

Jaques said to himself, “This fool sometimes makes sense.”

Touchstone thought, *When a woman is beautiful, I hope that she is not chaste so that I may sleep with her without having to marry her.*

“Well, I am not beautiful,” Audrey said, “and therefore I pray that the gods will make me chaste.”

“Indeed, you should wish that you be chaste. Wasting chastity on a dirty slut is like putting good meat on a dirty dish.”

“I am not a slut, though I thank the gods I am ugly.”

“Well, praised be the gods that you are ugly! Sluttishness may come hereafter. But be it as it may be, I want to marry you, and to that end I have met with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the nearby village, who has promised to meet me here and to marry us.”

“I would like to see this meeting,” Jaques said to himself.

“I agree to marry you,” Audrey said. “May the gods give us joy!”

“Amen,” Touchstone said. “A man could, if he had a fearful heart, hesitate about getting married here because here we have no church but the forest, no congregation but horned beasts. That could make a man afraid that the horns were an evil omen. Horns are the symbol of a cuckold — a man with an unfaithful wife. But what of that! Have courage, Touchstone! Horns may be odious, but they are inevitable. It is said, ‘Many a man thinks that his wealth is exhaustible.’ That is true: Many men have horns and will never see the end of the horns that his wife gives him. Well, horns are the dowry that having a wife gets him. The husband does not get his own horns. Horns? Definitely they exist. Do only poor men get horns? No, no; the noblest stag has horns as big as the horns of the rascal. Is the single man therefore blessed because he lacks horns? No.

“A town with a wall is better off than a village without a wall, and so a married man with horns is better off than a bachelor without horns. The horns protect the man’s head like the walls protect the town. It is better to know the art of defense than not to know it, and it is better to get horns than to have no sex at all. To say the truth, a wife is worth defending.”

He paused, and then said, “Here comes Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village.”

Touchstone said, “Sir Oliver Martext, we are happy to see you. Will you marry us here under this tree, or shall we go with you to your chapel?”

“Is there anyone here to give away the woman?”

“I will not take her as the gift of any man. I don’t want sloppy seconds,” Touchstone said.

“Truly, she must be given away, or the marriage is not lawful.”

Jaques came forward and said, “Proceed with the wedding. I will give her away.”

Touchstone said to Jaques, “Good day, good Master What-do-ye-call-it.”

Jaques knew that Touchstone was pretending not to want to say “Jaques” in front of the priest — one way to pronounce “Jaques” is “Jakes,” a word meaning “toilet.”

Touchstone continued, “How do you do, sir? It is good to see you. I enjoyed talking to you the last time we met. I am very glad to see you. We have a little ceremony taking place here.”

Touchstone added, “You may keep your head covered. Keep your hat on your head. No one is here to whom you need show that much respect.”

“Will you be married today, motley fool?” Jaques asked.

“The ox has a yoke, sir. The horse has a bridle. The falcon has bells attached to its feet in order to make it easier to find. Men have sexual desires that need to be in some way controlled. Pigeons stroke their beaks together, and marriage allows men and women to kiss — and more.”

“And will you, a man of good breeding, be married under a bush like a beggar?” Jaques asked. “Go to a church, and have a good priest who can tell you what marriage is. This Sir Oliver fellow will only join you together as they join together the sections of wood paneling on walls. One of you will turn out to be a bad panel and like green timber over time will warp, and the two of you will be pulled apart.”

Touchstone said, “Perhaps I will be better off married by Sir Oliver than by another priest. He is not likely to marry me properly, and if I am not married properly, I will have a good excuse later to leave my wife.”

“Come with me,” Jaques said, “and let me give you advice.”

Touchstone said, “Come with me, sweet Audrey. We must get married, or we will live in bawdry.”

He added, “Farewell, good Master Oliver. Let us not sing this popular song:

“*Oh, sweet Oliver,*

*“Oh, handsome Oliver,*

*“Don’t leave me behind.”*

“Instead, let us sing this song:

*“Go away quickly,*

*“Begone, I say,*

*“I will not go to the wedding with you.”*”

Jaques, Touchstone, and Audrey left, leaving Sir Oliver behind, who said, “It does not matter that no wedding was performed. None of these capricious rascals will succeed in mocking me enough to drive me away from pursuing my calling.”

— 3.4 —

In another part of the forest, Rosalind and Celia were talking. Rosalind was upset because Oliver had not come to woo her at the time they had arranged.

“Don’t talk to me,” Rosalind said. “I am going to cry.”

“If you want to cry, then cry. But remember that tears do not become a man.”

“Don’t I have a good reason to cry?”

“You have as good a reason as anyone to cry, so therefore cry.”

“Orlando’s red hair is the same color as the hair of Judas, who betrayed Christ with a kiss.”

“I think that his hair is somewhat browner than the hair of Judas, but his kisses are like those of Judas.”

“Actually, his hair is a good color,” Rosalind said.

“His hair is an excellent color,” Celia said, humoring her friend. “Chestnut is the very best color.”

“And his kisses are as full of saintliness as the touch of holy bread — bread blessed in the church and then distributed to the poor.”

“He has acquired a pair of the cast-off, cast-iron, chaste lips from a statue-in-progress of Diana, goddess of virginity. Not even a nun who has pledged herself to a life of cold and barren chastity kisses with greater purity. The very ice of chastity is in his kisses.”

“But why did he swear that he would come this morning, and he has not come?”

“To be certain, there is no truth in him.”

“Do you think so?”

“Yes. I do not think that he is a pick-pocket or a horse-thief, but as for his truthfulness in love, I think that his promises are like an empty goblet or a hollow, worm-eaten nut.”

“You do not think that he is trustworthy in love?”

“If he were in love, he would be trustworthy, but I do not think that he is in love.”

“You have heard him swear plainly that he was.”

“‘Was’ is not ‘is,’” Celia said. “Besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tavern owner who overcharges and swears that the bill is accurate. Both of them lie.”

She added, “Orlando is staying here in the forest with your father, Duke Senior.”

Rosalind said, “I met my father the Duke yesterday and talked to him. Because I am in disguise and because it has been many years since he last saw me, he did not recognize me. He asked about my parents, and I said that they were as good as he was. He laughed and stopped asking me about them. But why are we talking about fathers, when we could be talking about a man such as Orlando?”

“Orlando is an excellent man!” Celia said. “He writes excellent verse, speaks excellent words, swears excellent oaths and breaks them excellently on the heart of his lover, the way that an inexperienced jousting, who spurs his horse on only one side, breaks his staff across the shield of his opponent rather than directly upon the shield. Both Orlando and the novice jousting are notable fools, but everything is excellent when one is young and foolish.”

Celia looked up and said, “Who is coming here?”

Corin walked up to Rosalind and Celia and said, “Both of you have often asked about the young shepherd who laments being in love, whom you saw sitting by me on the ground, praising the proud disdainful shepherdess whom he loved.”

“Well, what about him?” Celia asked.

“If you want to see a pageant truly played between two opposites — one with the pale complexion of true love and the other with the red glow of scorn and proud disdain — go with me a little distance and I will show it to you.”

“Come, let’s go with Corin,” Rosalind said. “The sight of lovers feeds those in love.”

She said to Corin, “Bring us to this sight, and you will be able to say that I proved to be a busy actor in their play.”

— 3.5 —

In a nearby part of the forest, the young shepherd Silvius was pleading with his beloved, Phoebe, who did not love him.

Silvius said, “Sweet Phoebe, do not scorn me. Do not, Phoebe. Say that you do not love me, but do not say it so bitterly. The common executioner, whose heart is hard because it is accustomed to death, says ‘Forgive me’ before he drops his ax on the criminal’s neck. Will you be crueller than an executioner who dies and lives by drops of blood?”

Rosalind, Celia, and Corin arrived and witnessed the rest of the scene between the two lovers.

Phoebe replied, “I don’t want to be your executioner. I run away from you because I don’t want to injure you. You tell me that murder is in my eye. That is very clever of you: It is certain, and very probable — ha! — that eyes, which are the frailest and softest things and which shut their coward gates — their eyelids — against the assaults of specks of dust, ought

to be called tyrants, butchers, murderers! Now I am frowning on you with all my heart. If my eyes can wound, now let them kill you. Go ahead and pretend to faint. Go ahead and fall down now. If you cannot, then out of shame stop lying that my eyes are murderers! Go ahead and show me the wound that my eye has made in you. If you scratch yourself with a pin, some mark will remain behind. If you put your hand on some rush plants and lean on them, your palm will bear a mark and indentation for a short while. But my eyes, which I have been darting at you, have not hurt you. I am sure that eyes have no force that can harm anyone.”

“Oh, dear Phoebe, if you ever — and that may be soon — meet someone young and handsome who makes you fall in love, then you shall understand the invisible wounds the sharp arrows of love make.”

“Until that time, do not come near me. And when that time comes, go ahead and mock me. Do not pity me then because until that time comes I will not pity you.”

Rosalind had promised to be a busy actor in their play, and now she came forth and said to Phoebe, “And why won’t you pity this young man, I ask you? Who is your mother? Who taught you to insult and exult, both at the same time, over the wretched? You have no beauty — to go to bed in the dark, you must carry a candle, unlike a beautiful woman whose beauty lights up the darkness. So why are you proud and pitiless?”

Phoebe stared at Ganymede. She had fallen in love at first sight with Rosalind, whom she thought to be a young man.

Rosalind noticed Phoebe staring at her and asked, “Why, what do you mean by this? Why are you staring at me?”

Amused, she realized that Phoebe had fallen in love with her. She said to Phoebe, “I see no more in you than in the ordinary ready-made — not specially made — goods for sale in the market. By God, I think you mean to ensnare my eyes, too, and make me love you the way that this young shepherd loves you! No, proud mistress, do not hope that I will fall in love with you. Your inky and ugly brows, your black and ugly silk hair, your black, beady, ugly eyes, and your yellowish-white complexion will not subdue me and make me adore you.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “You foolish shepherd, why do you follow her like the foggy south wind puffing with sighs and tears? You are a thousand times better looking than this woman is. It is such fools as you who fill the world full of ugly children after you marry ugly women. It is not her mirror that flatters her — you do. With you serving as her mirror, she sees herself looking more beautiful than the features of her face justify.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “Young woman, know yourself: Get down on your knees and fast and thank heaven for this good man’s love: For I must tell you as a friend in your ear, ‘Sell when you can: you are not for all markets. Get a man while you can. You are not pretty enough to get many offers.’ Beg this man to forgive you, and take his offer. Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer — ugliness is at its most ugly when it is combined with scornfulness.”

Phoebe replied, “Sweet youth, please criticize me for a year without stopping. I prefer to hear you criticize me than to hear this man woo me.”

“Silvius has fallen in love with your scornfulness,” Rosalind said to Phoebe.

“And now Phoebe is falling in love with my anger,” Rosalind said to Celia and Corin.

To Silvius, Rosalind said, “If this is true, as quickly as she answers you with frowns, I’ll rebuke her sharply with bitter words.”

She asked Phoebe, “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“I bear you no ill will.”

“Please, do not fall in love with me,” Rosalind said. “I am falser than vows made when drunk. Besides, I don’t like you.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “If you want to know where I live, my cottage is in that grove of olive trees over there.”

She asked Celia, “Will you go with me now, sister?”

She advised Silvius, “Shepherd, woo Phoebe vigorously.”

She said to Celia, “Come, sister.”

She advised Phoebe, “Shepherdess, look more favorably on Silvius, and do not be proud. Even if everyone in the world could see you, he is the only man who would find you attractive.”

She said to Celia and Corin, “Come, let us return to our flock.”

Rosalind, Celia, and Corin departed, and Phoebe said to herself, “Dead Shepherd, dear Christopher Marlowe, now I understand what you meant when you wrote, ‘Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?’”

Silvius began, “Sweet Phoebe —”

Phoebe asked, “What do you want, Silvius?”

Silvius said, “Sweet Phoebe, pity me.”

“Why, I am sorry for you, gentle Silvius.”

“Wherever sorrow is, relief should be. If you feel sorrow at my grief in love, you should give me your love. That way, both your sorrow and my grief would be exterminated.”

“You have my love. Is not that neighborly? Christ said in Mark 12:31, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’”

Silvius said, “That is not the kind of love I want. I want you.”

“Why, that is covetousness. The Bible says in Exodus 20:17, ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.’”

She thought to herself, *I have given my heart to that young man — the neighbor of Silvius — who criticized me. Silvius is coveting something that belongs to his neighbor.*

She added, “Silvius, I have hated you, but now I will endure your company, which previously was irksome to me. I am doing this not because I love you, but because you can talk about love so well. I also have an errand for you, but you must not ask for anything more than your own happiness that I find you useful.”

Silvius replied, “So holy and so perfect is my love for you and I am so lacking in your favor that I will think it a most plenteous crop to glean the leftover and broken ears of corn after the farmer has reaped the main harvest. In other words, I will be grateful for whatever scraps of attention you throw to me. Smile at me once in a while, and I will live upon those smiles.”

Phoebe asked, “Do you know the young man who spoke to me a moment ago?”

“Not very well, but I have met him often. He bought the cottage and the pasture that the churlish peasant once owned.”

“Don’t think that I love him, though I am asking about him. He is only a silly boy, yet he talks well. But what do I care for words? Still, words do well when he who speaks them pleases those who hear them. He is an attractive youth — well, not very attractive. Certainly, he is proud, and yet his pride becomes him. He will make a proper man. The best thing about him is his complexion; and faster than his tongue offended me, his face healed the offense. He is not very tall, yet for his age he is tall. His legs are but so-so, and yet they are good. His lips had a pretty redness — a little riper and more luxurious red than the red of his cheeks. His cheeks’ color was just the difference between red and pink.

“Some women, Silvius, had they looked as closely at him as I did, would have almost fallen in love with him. As for me, I neither love him nor hate him. Still, I have more cause to hate him than to love him. What right had he to criticize me the way he did? He said my eyes were black and ugly and my hair was black and ugly. I remember that he scorned me. I am surprised that I didn’t criticize him.

“But that does not matter. Omittance is no quittance — just because I didn’t criticize him then does not mean that I can’t criticize him now. I will write to him a very taunting letter, and you will give it to him. Will you do that, Silvius?”

“Phoebe, with all my heart.”

“I will write the letter immediately. The content is in my head and in my heart. I will be bitter with him and very short — exceedingly curt — with him. Let’s go, Silvius.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

In another part of the forest, Rosalind, Celia, and Jaques were talking.

Jaques said to Rosalind, “Please, pretty youth, let me become better acquainted with you.”

“They say you are a melancholy fellow.”

“I am melancholy. I do love being melancholy better than laughing.”

“Those who are either too sad or too merry are abominable fellows and betray themselves to every modern criticism — they are worse than drunkards when it comes to making themselves targets for ridicule.”

“Why, it is good to be serious and thoughtful and say nothing.”

“Why then, it is good to be a post in the ground. A post says nothing.”

“I have my own kind of melancholy. I do not have the scholar’s melancholy, which is envious. I do not have the musician’s melancholy, which is imaginative. I do not have the courtier’s melancholy, which is proud. I do not have the soldier’s melancholy, which is ambitious. I do not have the lawyer’s melancholy, which is politic. I do not have the lady’s melancholy, which is dainty. I do not have the lover’s melancholy, which is all of these. I have my own kind of melancholy, which is compounded of many ingredients, extracted from many objects, and indeed the various thoughts inspired by my travels. These thoughts wrap me in a very moody melancholy.”

“You are a traveller!” Rosalind said. “By my faith, you have great reason to be melancholic. I am afraid that you may have sold your own lands to see the lands of other men. If that is the case, if you have seen much and have nothing, then you have rich eyes and poor hands.”

“Yes, I have gained my experience.”

“And your experience makes you sad and serious. I would rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad, especially if I would have to travel to acquire my sadness!”

Orlando arrived; he was an hour late for his appointment to woo Rosalind.

Orlando said, “Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind!”

Jaques recognized that this sentence was in iambic pentameter. It had five feet of two syllables each with the stress on the second syllable. Unrhymed iambic pentameter is known as blank verse.

Jaques said, “It is time for me to go. May God be with you, if you are going to talk in blank verse.”

“Farewell, Monsieur Traveller,” Rosalind said. “Since you are a traveller, you ought to act like other travellers. Be sure that you lisp with a cute foreign accent and wear strange suits of foreign fashions. Be sure to disparage all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with

the land where you were born, and almost criticize God for making you look like an Englishman. If you don't do these things, I will hardly think you have ridden in a gondola."

Jaques departed.

Rosalind said to Orlando, "How are you, Orlando! Where have you been all this while? You think that you are a lover! If you ever play such another trick on me, do not ever come within my sight."

Orlando objected, "My fair Rosalind, I came within an hour of the time I promised to be here."

"Came within an hour of the time you — who are supposedly a lover — promised to be here! A man who will divide a minute into a thousand parts and break only one part of the thousandth part of a minute in the affairs of love is a man about whom it may be said that Cupid has patted him on the shoulder, but I swear that that man's heart has not been wounded by Cupid's arrow."

"Pardon me, dear Rosalind."

"No. If you are ever again so late for a date, come no more within my sight. I would prefer to be wooed by a snail."

"By a snail?"

"Yes, by a snail," Rosalind said. "Though the snail comes slowly, he carries his house with him. He has something to offer a woman — more than you can offer, I think. Besides, the snail brings its destiny with him."

"What destiny is that?"

"Snails have what look like horns," Rosalind said. "Men who are late for dates must expect to be made cuckolds. The snail comes pre-equipped with horns and therefore knows what to expect."

*I get it, Orlando thought. I had better not be late for dates for Rosalind. If I am late, she will get another boyfriend.*

"Virtuous women are not horn-makers, and my Rosalind is virtuous."

"And I am your Rosalind."

Celia said to Rosalind, "It pleases him to call you Rosalind, but he has a better-looking Rosalind than you."

*I get it, Orlando thought. If I am late for dates, my loved one and her friends will think that I have another girlfriend.*

Rosalind smiled at the expression on Orlando's face, and then she said to him, "Come, woo me, woo me, for now I am in a good mood and likely enough to consent to love you. What would you say to me now, if I were your precious Rosalind?"

"I would kiss her before I spoke."

"No, you had better speak first, and when you were stuck for something to say, then you could kiss her. Very good orators, when they are out of words to say, will spit, but lovers who are out

of words to say — God help us! — should take the cleaner option and kiss.”

“Suppose Rosalind declines to kiss me?”

“Then you have a new subject to talk about: You can beg her for a kiss.”

“Who could be out of words to say when he is with the woman he loves?”

“You had better be out of me than in me if I were your girl — or I would think that my virtue is less impressive than my wit,” Rosalind joked.

“Let’s talk about a different ‘out.’ Would I be out of suit?”

“A suit can mean a suit of clothing. If you were in me, you would be out of suit. But given that I am virtuous, you would not be out of your apparel, but you would still be out of your suit — that is, request. I would make you give up your attempt to seduce me. Am I not your Rosalind?”

“I am happy to say that you are, because I want to talk about her.”

“Well, let me pretend to be her and say that I will not have you as my boyfriend.”

“Then let me be me and say that I will die.”

“Do not yourself die. Die by proxy — have a lawyer act for you by proxy. But seriously, people have examined the verses of the Bible and concluded that this poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all that time not one man has died in real life because of love. Troilus loved Cressida, but he had his brains dashed out with a Greek club, yet he did what he could to die from love before he died from the club and he is regarded as an exemplary lover. Leander would have lived for many happy years, even if his loved one, Hero, had become a nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night. Leander, that good youth, went into the Hellespont to wash himself but started cramping and was drowned. The foolish coroners of that age said that the cause of his death was his love for Hero of Sestos. They said that he drowned when a storm arose while he was swimming in the Hellespont to visit his lover. All of these tales of men who have died from love are lies. Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but the men did not die because of love.”

“I do not want the real Rosalind to think like this. I believe that her frown might kill me.”

“Trust me, her frown will not kill a fly.”

*I get it, Orlando thought. Some of the ideas of romantic love are exaggerated. Still, love really does exist.*

Rosalind said, “But come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more agreeable mood. Ask me for whatever you want. I will grant it.”

“Then love me, Rosalind.”

“Yes, I will — on Fridays and Saturdays and all the other days of the week.”

“And so you will have me?”

“Yes, and twenty more men like you.”

“What are you saying?”

“Aren’t you good?”

“I hope so.”

“Can one desire too much of a good thing?”

*I get it, Orlando thought. Rosalind has a healthy interest in having sex, and it is a good idea for me to marry her so that each of us is committed to the other.*

Rosalind said to Celia, who had been listening to and laughing at the conversation between Rosalind and Orlando, “Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry us.”

She added, “Give me your hand, Orlando. What do you say, sister?”

Orlando said, “Please, marry us.”

Celia was laughing hard. She said, “I cannot say the words.”

Rosalind pretended that Celia had forgotten words that no woman who was either married or wanted to be married would forget: “You must begin, ‘Will you, Orlando — ’”

“OK,” Celia said, “Will you, Orlando, take Rosalind to be your lawfully wedded wife?”

“I will.”

Rosalind knew that “will” is not the same as “do.” She wanted a real commitment, and so she asked, “Yes, but when?”

“Right now, as fast as Aliena can marry us.”

“Then you must say, ‘I take you, Rosalind, as my lawfully wedded wife.’”

“I take you, Rosalind, as my lawfully wedded wife.”

*I get it, Orlando thought. Rosalind wants a real commitment, not a promise to be committed.*

Rosalind said to Celia, “I should ask you for the wedding license. But I do take you, Orlando, as my lawfully wedded husband.”

*I get it, Orlando thought. If I make a commitment to Rosalind, she will make a commitment to me.*

Rosalind added, “I am a girl who has raced ahead of the priest and answered the priest’s question before he even asked it — a woman’s thought always runs ahead of her actions.”

“All thoughts are like that — they are winged.”

“Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possessed her — that is, married her and slept with her.”

“Forever and a day.”

“Say ‘for a day.’ Leave out the ‘forever.’ No, no, Orlando. Men are April when they woo, and December when they wed. Virgins are May when they are virgins, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of you than a Barbary cock-pigeon is of his hen, more

clamorous than a parrot protesting against rain, more fond of novelty than an ape, more changeable in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing, like a statue of Diana gushing water in a fountain — I will do that when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a hyena when you want to go to sleep.”

“Will my Rosalind act like that?”

“I swear by my life that she will act the way that I act.”

*I get it, Orlando thought. The first flush of romantic love will not last. At times Rosalind will get on my nerves, and no doubt at times I will get on her nerves. But even though the first flush of romantic love will not last, a committed relationship can last.*

“But Rosalind is wise.”

“Or else she would not have the wit to act like this. The wiser she is, the more wayward she will be. Close the doors upon a woman’s wit, and it will fly out of the window. Shut the window, and it will fly out of the keyhole. Stop up the keyhole, and it will fly out the chimney with the smoke.”

“A man who had a wife with such a wit, he might say to her, ‘Wit, where do you wander? What are you thinking! Where are your senses!’”

“You may want to wait to say that when you see your wife’s wit going to your neighbor’s bed.”

“And what wit could have wit enough to make an excuse for that?”

“She would say that she went to seek you there. You shall never find her without her excuse, unless you find her without a tongue. Any woman who cannot make her sin the fault of her husband should never breastfeed her child — because her child will turn out to be a fool. Breast-fed children get either wisdom or foolishness from the milk of the mother.”

*I get it, Orlando thought. A good marriage will consist of years of happiness. A bad marriage will consist of years of unhappiness. An unhappy wife can make her husband’s life a living Hell. A happy wife can make her husband’s life a living Heaven. A wise husband will not ignore his wife. He will pay attention to her, and he will show up when he tells her he will show up — or have a damn good reason for not showing up. Before and after I marry Rosalind, I had better treat her right. And if I treat her right, I am sure that she will treat me right.*

He said, “For the next two hours, Rosalind, I will have to leave you.”

Rosalind assumed an overly dramatic, joking tone: “No, dear love! I cannot be away from you for two whole hours!”

“I must have dinner with Duke Senior. By two o’clock I will be with you again.”

Rosalind continued with an overly dramatic, joking tone: “Yes, go on your way. Go on your way. I knew the kind of man whom you would turn out to be: a faithless lover. My friends told me as much, and I thought no less. Your flattering tongue won me over. But don’t worry about it. I am just one more woman who has been cast away and so I will die!”

Both Rosalind and Orlando smiled. No man had ever died of love — and neither had any woman.

Rosalind asked, seriously, “So you will return at two o’clock?”

“Yes, sweet Rosalind.”

*I mean it, Orlando thought, I have learned my lesson. If I don’t come on time, I will have a damn good reason.*

Rosalind said, “I swear, and I mean it — so help me, God — and I also swear the pretty little oaths that lovers swear that if you break even the tiniest part of your promise or come even one minute late, I will think you the most pathetic breaker of promises and the most hollow lover and the most unworthy of her whom you call Rosalind who may be chosen out of the gross band of the unfaithful lovers. Therefore, beware my anger and keep your promise.”

“I will keep my promise as religiously as I would if you were really Rosalind. Goodbye.”

“Well, Time is the old judge who examines all such offenders, and so Time will determine the truth of your promise. When the time comes for you to return here, we will see if you are actually here. Goodbye.”

Orlando departed.

Celia, who had been amused by the conversation between Rosalind and Orlando, said to Rosalind, “You have severely criticized all women in your love-talk with Orlando. We women should remove all your male clothing and show the world first that you are a female and second that like a foul bird, you have dirtied your own nest.”

“Oh, cousin, cousin, cousin, my pretty cousin, I wish that you knew how many fathoms deep I am in love! But the depth of my love cannot be sounded: My affection has an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal. My love is so deep that it cannot be measured.”

“Or, rather, your love is bottomless. As fast as you pour in love, it runs out.”

“No, let Cupid judge how deeply in love I am. Let Cupid, that same wicked bastard of Venus, who conceived during an affair with Mercury, who was not her husband, judge how deeply in love I am. Let that same wicked bastard, who was the result of an impulse and was born of madness, judge how deeply in love I am. Let Cupid, that blind rascally boy who abuses everyone’s eyes because his own are out, judge how deeply in love I am. Cupid is blindfolded when he shoots his arrows, and they cause people to look at each other differently. I tell you, Aliena, that I cannot stand being away from Orlando: I will go and find a shadowy place and sigh until he returns.”

Aliena replied, “And I will take a nap.”

— 4.2 —

Jaques and some Lords, who were dressed like foresters, had been hunting in the forest. The hunt had been successful; they had killed a horned stag.

Jaques asked, “Whose shot killed the deer?”

One of the Lords replied, “Sir, it was my shot.”

“Let us present this Lord to Duke Senior in a triumphal procession as if he were a Roman conqueror,” Jaques said. “We should set the stag’s horns on this Lord’s head to serve as a

victorious wreath.”

He asked a forester, “Do you have a song that is right for this occasion?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Sing it. It does not matter whether it is in tune, as long as it makes enough noise.”

The forester sang, “*What shall he have who killed the deer?*”

“*He shall have the deer’s leather skin and horns to wear.*”

“*Then let us sing to him as we go home.*”

The other Lords picked up the carcass of the deer and started to carry it back to their camp.

The forester sang, “*Do not scorn to wear the horn;*

“*It was a crest before you were born:*

“*Your father’s father wore it,*

“*And your father bore it:*

“*The horn, the horn, the lusty horn*

“*Is not a thing to laugh at and to scorn.*”

— 4.3 —

Rosalind and Celia were talking.

Rosalind said, “What do you say now? Isn’t it past two o’clock? Orlando is not here!”

Celia said, I promise you that with pure love and troubled brain, he has taken his bow and arrows, told everyone that he was going hunting, and set off to take a nap. Most lovers can’t sleep because they are thinking about their beloved. Orlando is not like that.”

She added, “Look at who is coming now.”

Silvius, carrying a letter, walked up to them and said to Rosalind, “My errand is to you, fair youth. My gentle Phoebe asked me to give you this letter. I do not know its contents, but judging by Phoebe’s stern expression and angry and waspish movements while she was writing it, it must bear an angry message. Please pardon me. I am only a guiltless messenger.”

Rosalind read the letter and said, “Patience herself would be shocked by this letter and want to start a fight. If I can bear this letter, then I can bear anything. Phoebe writes that I am not handsome and that I lack manners. She calls me proud, and she says that she could not love me even if men were rare as the phoenix. Since only one phoenix lives at a time, reproducing by cremating its old self and arising anew from the ashes, Phoenix is telling me that she would not love me if I were the last man on Earth. My God! But why is she writing to me? I do not want her love — her love is not the hare that I am hunting.”

She said to Silvius, “Shepherd, you wrote this.”

“No, I did not,” Silvius protested. “I did not know its contents. Phoebe wrote it.”

“No, you are a fool if you think that I will believe that. You wrote this letter because you love Phoebe — you are now the most foolish kind of lover. I saw her hands. She has hands like leather. Her hands are brown like the color of sandstone. Truly, I thought that she was wearing gloves, but those were really her hands. She has the hands of a hard-working housewife, but that does not matter. I say that she did not write this letter. This letter was written by a man in a man’s handwriting.”

“No, this is her letter and her handwriting.”

“Why, this letter is written in a boisterous and cruel style — a style fit for someone who is looking for a fight. Why, she challenges me to fight like a Muslim Turk challenges a Christian to fight. The gentle brain of a woman could not write such outrageously rude sentences and such black words — they are blacker in meaning than the ink in which they are written on the page. Would you like to hear me read this letter out loud?”

“Yes, please, because I do not know what Phoebe says in the letter, although I have heard too many of Phoebe’s cruel words.”

“Phoebe has Phoebe-ed you in the past. Now she is Phoebe-ing me. Listen to the words that the tyrant wrote.”

Rosalind read out loud, “*Are you a god into a shepherd turned,*

“*So that a maiden’s heart you can have burned?*”

Rosalind commented, “Can a woman rant and rave like this?”

Silvius said, “Do you call that ranting and raving!”

Rosalind read out loud, “*Why, having laid your godhead apart,*

“*Are you warring with a woman’s heart?*”

Rosalind commented, “Did you ever hear such ranting and raving?”

Rosalind read out loud, “*Whiles the eyes of man did woo me,*

“*They could do no harm to me.*”

Rosalind commented, “Men could not hurt her. In other words, she is calling me a beast.”

Rosalind read out loud, “*If the scorn of your bright eyes*

“*Has power to raise such love in my eyes,*

“*Then in me what strange effect*

“*Would they work if you looked at me with kind aspect!*

“*While you criticized me, you I did love;*

“*How then might your prayers move!*

“*He who brings this love letter to thee*

“*Little knows this love in me:*

*“And by him send a sealed letter that tells me your mind;*

*“Whether that your youth and disposition kind*

*“Will the faithful offer take*

*“Of me and all that I can make;*

*“Or else by him my love deny,*

*“And then I’ll think about how I will die.”*

Silvius said, “This is a love letter to you! She is not at all challenging you to a fight!”

“Poor shepherd!” Celia said to Silvius.

“Do you pity Silvius?” Rosalind asked Celia. “Don’t! He deserves no pity.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “Will you love such a woman as Phoebe? Why? She has used you! She has made you an instrument and is playing bad music on you! She has used you to carry her love letter to another man! Well, go back to her, for I can see that love has made you a tame snake — your snake is tame. Tell her that if she loves me, I order her to love you. If she will not love you, I will never have her unless you beg me to have her. If you are a true lover, leave immediately and don’t say a word.”

She looked up and said to Celia, “Here comes more company.”

Silvius departed, and Oliver, the oldest brother of Orlando, walked up to Rosalind and Celia, who of course did not recognize him.

“Good day, pretty women,” Oliver said courteously. “Please tell me, if you know, where in this part of the forest stands a shepherd’s cottage in a grove of olive trees?”

Celia replied, “It is west of here, in a neighboring valley. The row of willows by the murmuring stream will take you to the cottage if you keep the willows on your right side. But at this time of day, the cottage stands empty. No one is at home.”

Oliver replied, “If my eye has profited from my hearing, then I know who you are from the description I have heard of you: ‘The boy is good looking, feminine, and carries himself as if he were an older sister. The woman is short and darker than her brother.’ Are you the owners of the cottage I asked about?”

“It is no boast, since you have asked us directly, to say that we are the owners of that cottage,” Celia replied.

“Orlando sends his regards to both of you, and to that youth whom he calls his Rosalind, he sends this bloody handkerchief,” Oliver said.

Then he asked Rosalind, “Are you that youth?”

“I am, but what does all of this mean?”

“I will have to tell you some shameful things about myself if you want to know who I am — and how, and why, and where Orlando’s handkerchief was stained with blood.”

“Please, tell us your story,” Celia said.

“When Orlando recently departed from you, he made a promise to return again in an hour.”

Rosalind thought, *Actually, within two hours. Apparently, Orlando wanted to make sure that he got here on time.*

Oliver continued, “But while he was walking in this forest, thinking both bitter and sweet thoughts of love, something happened. He glanced to the side, and saw something unexpected. Under an oak, whose boughs were mossy with age and whose aged top was bare and dry, he saw a wretched ragged man with long, wild hair lying on his back and sleeping. A green and gold snake had wreathed itself around this man’s neck and its threatening head was approaching his open mouth. Suddenly, seeing Orlando, it unwrapped itself from the man’s neck and zigzagged away and slithered under a bush in whose shade a lioness, with udders all sucked dry by its cubs, lay crouching with its head on the ground. With catlike patience, it watched to see when the sleeping man should get up because lions and lionesses — the monarchs of the animal kingdom — will not prey on anything that seems to be dead. Seeing this, Orlando approached the man and discovered that the man was his oldest brother.”

“I have heard him speak of that same brother,” Celia said. “He called him the most unnatural brother and the most lacking in brotherly love who ever lived among men.”

“And well might Orlando describe him in that way because I know for myself that his oldest brother was exactly like that.”

“What did Orlando do?” Rosalind asked. “Did he leave him there to be food for the suckled and hungry lioness?”

“Twice he turned his back on his oldest brother and thought to leave him there, but his natural affection was stronger even than his desire for revenge, and his nature was stronger than his desire to give his oldest brother the just desserts that he had earned. Therefore, Orlando battled and quickly defeated the lioness. Hearing the noise of that battle, I awoke.”

“Are you Orlando’s oldest brother?” Celia asked.

“Was it you whom he rescued?” Rosalind asked.

“Was it you who so often plotted to kill him?” Celia asked.

“It was I, but it is not I,” Oliver replied. “I do not stop myself from telling you what kind of man I was, since my conversion to a better kind of man tastes so sweet.”

“But what about the bloody handkerchief?” Rosalind asked.

“I’m coming to that. When my brother and I had tearfully told our stories from the first part to the last part, and I had, for example, told him how I came to be in that deserted part of the forest, Orlando led me to Duke Senior, who gave me fresh clothing and a meal and then placed me in Orlando’s care. Orlando then led me to his cave. There he stripped off his clothing, and I saw that the lioness had torn some of the flesh of his arm away. All this time, Orlando had bled, and now he fainted, and as he fainted, he cried out the name of Rosalind. To tell the rest of the story briefly, I revived him and bound up his wound. After a short time, Orlando — being strong at heart — sent me here, stranger as I am, to tell you this story so that you might excuse his broken promise. He wanted me to give this napkin dyed in his blood to the shepherd youth he calls Rosalind.”

Hearing that it was Orlando's blood on the handkerchief, Rosalind fainted.

"Ganymede! Sweet Ganymede!" Celia cried.

"Many people faint when they see blood," Oliver said.

"In this case, there is more to it," Celia said. "Cousin Ganymede!"

Celia was so upset that she did not call Ganymede "Brother Ganymede."

"Look, he is regaining consciousness," Oliver said.

"I wish I were at home," Rosalind said.

"We'll lead you there," Celia said.

She said to Oliver, "Please, take him by the arm."

"Be of good cheer, young man," Oliver said. "But are you a man? You lack the heart of a man."

"I do lack the heart of a man — I confess it," Rosalind said.

She paused, recovered somewhat, and then added, "Anyone would think my faint was well counterfeited! I put on a good act! Please, tell your brother how well I pretended to faint. Heigh-ho!"

"This was no counterfeit," Oliver said. "You did not fake your faint. Your face is too pale for me to believe that you faked this. You genuinely fainted."

"I faked it, I assure you," Rosalind said. "I am a good actor."

"Well, then, be brave and fake being a man," Oliver said.

"So I do," Rosalind said, "but, truly and rightfully, I should have been a woman."

"Come, Ganymede, you look paler and paler. Please, let's go home."

Celia said to Orlando, "Good sir, come with us."

"Yes, I will," Oliver said. "I must bear back to Orlando the news of whether or not you will excuse him for his absence, Rosalind."

"I will think about my answer," Rosalind said, "but tell him how well I faked my faint. Let's go."

Oliver and Celia held on to Rosalind's arms and helped her walk to the cottage.

## CHAPTER 5

— 5.1 —

Touchstone and Audrey were talking about getting married.

“We shall find a time to be married, Audrey. Be patient, gentle Audrey.”

“The priest — Sir Oliver Martext — was good enough to marry us, despite everything that the old gentleman — Jaques — said.”

“He was a most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey. He was a most vile Martext. But, Audrey, I have heard that a young man here in the forest lays claim to you — like me, he wants to marry you.”

“Yes, I know who he is. His name is William, but he has no legal claim on me. I have already said that I want to marry you. Look. Here comes the man you mean.”

“It is meat and drink to me to see a hick. Indeed, we who have good wits have much to answer for. We are always making fun of hicks. We cannot restrain ourselves.”

William politely said, “Good day, Audrey.”

“Good day to you, William.”

William politely said to Touchstone, “And good day to you, sir.”

“Good day, gentle friend. Cover your head — you don’t need to take off your hat to show me respect. Please cover your head. How old are you, friend?”

“Twenty-five, sir.”

“A mature age. Is your name William?”

“Yes, sir.”

“It is a good name. Were you born in the forest here?”

“Yes, sir, thank God.”

“‘Thank God.’ That is a good thing to say. Are you rich?”

“Moderately, sir.”

“‘Moderately’ is a good answer, a very excellent answer, but wait, it is not. It is a moderately good answer. Are you wise?”

“Yes, sir, I have a good mind.”

“Why, you say well, but I do now remember a saying: ‘The fool thinks that he is wise, but the wise man knows that he is a fool.’ The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth. This taught other people that grapes were made to eat and lips to open. Do you love Audrey?”

“Yes, I do, sir.”

“Give me your hand. Are you learned? Are you educated?”

“No, sir.”

“Then learn this from me: To have is to have. It is a figure of speech in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one empties the other; for all well-known writers do agree that the Latin word ‘*ipse*’ means he. Now know this: You are not *ipse*, for I am he.”

“Which he, sir?”

“The he, sir, who will marry Audrey. Therefore, you hick, abandon — which in the vulgar language means leave — the society — which boorish people call company — of this female — which in the common language is woman. Put all this together, and it means this: Either you abandon the society of this female, or you will perish, hick. Or, to say it in words that you will understand, you will die. To make it absolutely clear, I will kill you, make you go to a better world, translate your life into death, translate your liberty into bondage. I will poison you, or beat you with a club, or put a steel sword in you. I will fight you in a duel. I will overwhelm you with crafty plots. I will kill you in a hundred and fifty different ways, so therefore tremble and depart.”

“Do go away, good William,” Audrey said.

William looked at Audrey. It was clear that she preferred to marry Touchstone, so William said politely to Touchstone, “God bless you, sir,” and then he walked away.

Corin now arrived on the scene and said to Touchstone, “Ganymede and Aliena are looking for you. Come quickly!”

“Let’s hurry, Audrey,” Touchstone said.

He said to Corin, “I’m coming. I’m coming.”

— 5.2 —

In another part of the forest, Orlando said to Oliver, “Is it possible that on so little acquaintance you should have fallen in love with Aliena? That as soon as you saw her, you loved her? That as soon as you loved her, you wooed her? That, as soon as you wooed her, she agreed to marry you? Do you really mean to marry her?”

Oliver replied, “Do not criticize the giddiness — the haste — of these events. Do not criticize her poverty, the short time she and I have known each other, my sudden wooing of her, or her quick agreement to marry me. Instead, be like me and love Aliena. Say with me, ‘I love Aliena.’ Say with her that she loves me. Give your consent to this marriage so that she and I may live happily married together. This will work out to your advantage. I will give to you our father’s house and his estate that he bequeathed to me. I will live here and die here as a shepherd.”

“You have my consent to marry Aliena,” Orlando said. “Let your wedding be tomorrow. I will invite Duke Senior and all of his happy followers to the wedding. Go to Aliena and prepare for the wedding.”

Orlando added, “Look, here comes my Rosalind.”

Rosalind walked up to them and said to Oliver, “God bless you, brother-in-law,” meaning that they would become in-laws because Oliver would marry Aliena, Ganymede’s “sister.”

“God bless you, fair sister-in-law,” Oliver said. Like Orlando, he referred to Rosalind as a female, ignoring her disguise as Ganymede.

Oliver departed.

Rosalind said, “My dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see you wear your heart in a sling!”

“It is my arm.”

“I thought that your heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion.”

“My heart has been wounded, but by the eyes of a lady.”

“Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited a faint when he showed me your handkerchief?”

“Yes, he did, and he told me greater wonders than that.”

Rosalind thought, *He told you of his sudden love for Celia. I wonder if he told you of any other wonders.*

She said, “I know what you mean: the upcoming marriage. It is true that nothing was ever so sudden except the fight of two rams charging at each other and trying to hurt each other, and Julius Caesar’s theatrical brag of ‘I came, saw, and overcame.’ Your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked at each other, no sooner looked at each other but they loved each other, no sooner loved each other but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason for the sigh, no sooner knew the reason for the sigh but they sought a remedy to stop the sighs.

“In doing these things, they have made a pair of stairs leading to marriage. They will have to climb those stairs quickly, or they will enjoy the honeymoon before they enjoy the wedding ceremony. They are in the very passion of love and they must be together — clubs cannot part them.”

“They shall be married tomorrow, and I will invite the Duke to the wedding,” Orlando said. “But how bitter it is to look at happiness through another man’s eyes! Tomorrow my heart will be heavier than ever because I have not gotten what I wish for and must look at how happy my brother is because he has gotten what he wished for.”

“Do you want me to pretend to be Rosalind for you tomorrow?”

“I can live no longer by merely imagining what I want instead of actually having it.”

Rosalind thought, *Orlando has matured. He is ready to marry.*

“I will weary you then no longer with idle talk,” Rosalind said. “Listen to me. I will tell you something important. I know that you are a gentleman of good intelligence. I am not telling you this so that you should think that I am smart because I think that you are smart. I also am not trying to acquire a greater reputation except that I am trying to get you to believe that I want to help you. Believe, please, that I can do strange things. I have, since I was three years old, studied with a magician who is most knowledgeable in his white art and who does not practice damnable black magic.

“If you really love Rosalind as much as your behavior says you do, then when your brother marries Aliena, you shall marry Rosalind. I know into what circumstances of fortune she is driven; and it is not impossible to me, if it appears not inappropriate to you, to set her before your eyes tomorrow. She will be her own human self and not a phantom. Your soul shall not be in danger.”

“Do you really mean that you can do these things?”

“Yes, I do. I swear it by my life, which I value highly. I am a magician, but I am a white magician. Therefore, put your best clothes on and invite your friends to your wedding. If you want to be married tomorrow, you will be. And if you want to marry Rosalind tomorrow, you will.”

Rosalind heard a noise. She looked around, saw Phoebe and Silvius, and said, “Look, here comes a lover of mine and a lover of hers.”

Phoebe, who was angry, said to Rosalind, “Young man, you have done me much discourtesy. You showed Silvius the letter that I wrote to you.”

“I do not care,” Rosalind said. “It is my deliberate intention to be spiteful and discourteous to you. You are being followed by a faithful shepherd — Silvius — look at him and love him because he worships you.”

Phoebe said, “Good shepherd, tell this youth what it is to love.”

“It is to do nothing but sigh and weep, and so do I for Phoebe.”

Phoebe said, “And I for Ganymede.”

Orlando said, “And I for Rosalind.”

Rosalind said, “And I for no woman.”

Silvius added, “It is to be entirely faithful and full of devotion for the loved one, and so am I for Phoebe.”

Phoebe said, “And I for Ganymede.”

Orlando said, “And I for Rosalind.”

Rosalind said, “And I for no woman.”

Silvius added, “It is to live in a world of the imagination, a dream world, with emotions and wishes, with adoration, duty, and obedience, with humbleness, patience and impatience, purity, endurance, and dutiful respect, and so live I for Phoebe.”

Phoebe said, “And I for Ganymede.”

Orlando said, “And I for Rosalind.”

Rosalind said, “And I for no woman.”

Phoebe said to Rosalind, “If this is true, why do you blame me for loving you?”

Silvius said to Phoebe, “If this is true, why do you blame me for loving you?”

Orlando said, "If this is true, why do you blame me for loving you?"

Rosalind asked Orlando, "To whom are you speaking?"

"To Rosalind — a woman who is not here, and who does not hear me."

"Please, no more of this," Rosalind said. "It is like the howling of Irish wolves at the Moon."

Rosalind said to Silvius, "I will help you, if I can."

She said to Phoebe, "I would love you, if I could."

She said to everyone, "Tomorrow, all of you meet me as a group."

She said to Phoebe, "I will marry you, if I ever marry a woman, and I will be married tomorrow."

She said to Orlando, "I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied a man, and you will be married tomorrow."

She said to Silvius, "I will content you, if what pleases you will content you, and you will be married tomorrow."

She said to Orlando, "As you love Rosalind, meet me tomorrow."

She said to Silvius, "As you love Phoebe, meet me tomorrow."

She added, "And as I love no woman, I will meet all of you tomorrow. So farewell. Remember the commands that I have given to you."

"I will not fail to meet you tomorrow, if I am alive," Silvius said.

"Nor I," Phoebe said.

"Nor I," Orlando said.

### — 5.3 —

In another part of the forest, Touchstone said, "Tomorrow is the joyful day, Audrey. Tomorrow we will be married."

"I want to marry you with all my heart," Audrey said, "and I hope it is not an unchaste desire to really want to be a married woman."

She looked up and said, "Look, here come two of the banished Duke's pages."

One of the pages said to Touchstone, "Hello, honorable gentleman."

"Hello," Touchstone replied. "Come, sit down, and sing a song."

"We will sing," the other page said. He joked, "Sit in the middle," referring to a song with a lyric about "the fool in the middle."

The first page asked, "Shall we begin singing at once, without hawking or spitting or saying we are hoarse, which are the prologues before the singing of a bad voice?"

“Yes, let us begin singing immediately,” the other page said, “and let us both sing in unison. We shall sing like two gypsies riding on one horse.”

They sang this song:

*“It was a lover and his lass,*

*“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,*

*“That over the green wheat field did pass*

*“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,*

*“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:*

*“Sweet lovers love the spring.*

*“Between the rows of the rye,*

*“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino*

*“These pretty country folks would lie,*

*“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,*

*“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:*

*“Sweet lovers love the spring.*

*“This carol they began that hour,*

*“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,*

*“How that a life was as brief as the life of a flower*

*“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,*

*“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:*

*“Sweet lovers love the spring.*

*“And therefore seize the present time,*

*“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino;*

*“For love is crowned with the spring — the prime —*

*“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,*

*“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:*

*“Sweet lovers love the spring.”*

Touchstone said, “Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great content in the ditty, yet the song was sung out of tune.”

“You are deceived, sir,” a page said. “We kept time, we lost not our time. We kept the rhythm.”

“You did lose the time,” Touchstone replied. “I consider it but time lost to hear such a foolish song. May God be with you, and may God mend your voices! Come, Audrey. Let’s go.”

Touchstone thought, *The song had content. Carpe diem. Seize the day. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. What are the young lovers doing between the rows of the rye? The he is giving the she a green gown. Their activity results in the girl getting grass stains on the back of her gown. I was overly critical. Why? People expect me to be overly critical. Being overly critical is a way to be funny and make puns about time.*

— 5.4 —

Duke Senior, Amiens, Jaques, Orlando, Oliver, and Celia were gathered together.

Duke Senior asked, “Do you believe, Orlando, that the young Ganymede can do everything that he has promised?”

“I sometimes do believe that he can, and sometimes I do not. I am like those people who are afraid that their hopes are unfounded and are afraid that they will be disappointed.”

Rosalind, Silvius, and Phoebe now arrived.

Rosalind said, “Everybody, be patient once more, while we review our agreement.”

Rosalind said to Duke Senior, “You say that if I bring here your Rosalind, you will give her away in marriage to Orlando here?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if I had kingdoms to give away with her.”

Rosalind said to Orlando, “And you say that you will marry her, if I bring her here?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if I were of all kingdoms King.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “You say that you will marry me, if I am willing to marry you?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if I were to die one hour later.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “But if you refuse to marry me, you say that you will marry this most faithful shepherd, whose name is Silvius?”

“That is the agreement we have made.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “You say that you will marry Phoebe, if she is willing to marry you?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if marriage to her and death were the same thing.”

Rosalind said, “And I have said that I will straighten everything out.”

She then talked to several people in order:

“Keep your word, Duke Senior, to give away your daughter in marriage.

“Keep your word, Orlando, to marry Duke Senior’s daughter.

“Keep your word, Phoebe, that you will marry me, or if you refuse to marry me, that you will marry instead this shepherd, Silvius.

“Keep your word, Silvius, that you will marry Phoebe if she refuses to marry me.

“Now I will leave to make all these things come true.”

Rosalind and Celia left the others.

Duke Senior said, “I do see in this shepherd boy, Ganymede, some things that remind me of my daughter’s appearance.”

Orlando said, “My Lord, the first time that I ever saw him, I thought that he was a brother to your daughter. But, my good Lord, this boy was born in the forest, and he has been tutored in the fundamentals of many dangerous and magical studies by his uncle, who he says is a great magician, hidden in the circle of this forest.”

Touchstone and Audrey arrived.

Jaques said, “Apparently, another great Biblical flood is coming, and these couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools.”

“Salutation and greeting to you all!” Touchstone said.

“My good Lord, bid him welcome,” Jaques said to Duke Senior. “This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest. He swears that he has been a courtier.”

Touchstone said, “If any man doubts that, let him put me to the test. I have trod a slow, stately dance. I have flattered a lady; I have been hypocritical with my friend and deceptively courteous with my enemy. I have ruined three tailors by not paying my bills. I have had four quarrels, and I almost fought one duel.”

“How was the duel settled?” Jaques asked.

“I met with the man with whom I had quarreled, and we discovered that the quarrel rested upon the seventh cause,” Touchstone said.

“What is the seventh cause?” Jaques asked.

Jaques then added, “My good Lord, I hope that you like this fellow.”

Duke Senior replied, “I like him very well.”

“Thank you, sir. I return the compliment,” Touchstone said to Duke Senior. “I have pressed in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives who wish to be married, to swear to be faithful and to forswear to be unfaithful. Marriage requires us to be faithful, but blood — sexual passion — sometimes makes us want to break our vow to be faithful. This woman is a poor virgin, an ugly thing, but my own. It is a whim of mine, sir, to take that which no other man will. Rich chastity dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house — it is like a beautiful pearl in a foul oyster.”

Duke Senior said to Jaques about Touchstone, “Truly, he is very quick and full of sense and intelligence.”

Touchstone said, “According to the fool’s bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases. Remember: A fool’s bolt — that is, his arrow or wit — is soon shot. Like other fools, I quickly let my arrows fly. For fools, that is a sweet disease.”

Jaques asked, "What about the seventh cause? What did you mean by saying that the quarrel rested upon the seventh cause?"

Touchstone said, "The quarrel rested upon a lie seven times removed."

He said to Audrey, "Keep your knees together, Audrey."

Then he said, "Let me explain, sir. I disliked the cut of a certain courtier's beard. He sent me word that if I said his beard was not cut well, he was of the opinion that it was cut well. This is called the Retort Courteous.

"If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would send me word that he cut it to please himself. This is called the Quip Modest.

"If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would send me word that he did not value my judgment. This is called the Reply Churlish.

"If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would answer that I did not speak the truth. This is called the Reproof Valiant.

"If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would say that I lied. This is called the Counter-cheque Quarrelsome.

"The two that are left are the Lie Circumstantial and the Lie Direct."

"How often did you say that his beard was not well cut?" Jaques asked.

"I dared go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, and he dared not give me the Lie Direct, and so we measured swords, said that they were uneven in length and therefore fighting a duel would not be fair combat, and we parted."

"Can you name again the degrees of the lie?" Jaques asked.

"Of course, sir. We have books that tell us how to quarrel with each other without breaking any rules. They are like books of etiquette for quarreling. I will name you the degrees of the lie: The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Counter-cheque Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All of these you may say but avoid fighting a duel except for the Lie Direct, and even with that you may avoid fighting a duel if you use an If. I knew of one case when seven justices could not settle a quarrel, but when the two arguing parties met together, one of them thought of an If: 'If you said this, then I said that.' The two parties shook hands and swore to be brothers. The word 'If' is a remarkable peacemaker; there is much virtue in the word 'If.'"

Jaques said to Duke Senior, "Isn't this jester a rare fellow, my Lord? He's as good as this when speaking on any subject, and yet he is a fool."

"He uses his reputation as a fool to sneak up on people and shoot his arrows of wit at them," Duke Senior said.

Low, soft music played. Rosalind and Celia now appeared. Rosalind was now wearing women's clothing, and they had brought Hymen, the male god of marriage ceremonies, with them.

Hymen said, "There is laughter in heaven when earthly affairs are put right and people are as one."

Hymen said to Duke Senior, "Good Duke, greet your daughter, Rosalind. I, Hymen from Heaven, brought her to you. Yes, I brought her here so that you could join Rosalind's hand with Orlando's hand. They have pledged their hearts to each other."

Rosalind said to her father, Duke Senior, "To you I give myself, for I am yours."

Rosalind said to her beloved, Orlando, "To you I give myself, for I am yours."

Duke Senior said to Rosalind, "If there is truth in sight, you are my daughter."

Orlando said to Rosalind, "If there is truth in sight, you are my Rosalind."

A disappointed Phoebe said, "If sight and shape are true, why then, my love adieu!"

Rosalind said to Duke Senior, "I will have no father, if you are not he."

Rosalind said to Orlando, "I will have no husband, if you are not he."

Rosalind said to Phoebe, "I will never wed a woman, if you are not she."

"Quiet!" Hymen ordered. "I will banish confusion by making all these strange events clear. Here are eight people who must take hands and be married, if truth is true."

Hymen said to Orlando and Rosalind, "You and you no cross shall part. No argument shall ever separate you."

Hymen said to Oliver and Celia, "You and you are heart in heart. You have given your hearts to each other."

Hymen said to Phoebe, "You to his love must accord, or have a woman as your Lord. Unless you marry Silvius, Rosalind will be your husband."

Hymen said to Touchstone and Audrey, "You and you are securely bound together, like winter and foul weather."

Hymen said to the four couples, "While we sing a wedding hymn, all of you will talk to each other and ask each other questions. Satisfy your curiosity. Discuss how you came here, and talk about your upcoming marriages. That way, your amazement will diminish."

Many people sang this song:

*"Wedding is the crown that great Juno, goddess of marriage, wears,*

*"O blessed bond of board and bed!*

*"It is Hymen — marriage — who peoples every town.*

*"Solemn wedlock then be honored.*

*"Honor, solemn honor and renown,*

*"Is due to Hymen, the god of every town!"*

Duke Senior said to Celia, "My dear niece, you are as welcome here as is my daughter."

Phoebe said to Silvius, "I will not go back on my promise. You will be my husband. Your faithfulness to me makes me love you. We are one."

Jaques de Boys, the brother of Oliver and Orlando, suddenly arrived with news.

He said, "Let me say a few words. I am the second son of old Sir Rowland, and I bring these tidings to this fair assembly. Duke Frederick, hearing that every day men of high rank resorted to this forest, made ready a mighty army. They were on foot and under his personal command. The purpose of the army was to capture his brother, Duke Senior, and put him to the sword and kill him. Duke Frederick came to the outskirts of this forest, where he met an old religious man. After some conversation with him, Duke Frederick was converted both from his attempt to kill his brother and from this world. He has bequeathed his crown to his banished brother, and he has restored all their lands to those who were exiled with his banished brother. On my life, I swear that this is true."

Duke Senior said, "Welcome, young man. You have brought handsome gifts to your brothers' weddings. Oliver will get the land of his late father, and Orlando, who is marrying my only child, Rosalind, will get my powerful Dukedom after I die."

He added, "Now, in this forest, let us perform the four weddings that here were well begun and well conceived. Afterward, all of this happy number who have endured difficult days and nights with us shall share the good of our returned fortune, according to their ranks. In the meantime, let us forget this newly acquired courtly honor and enjoy our rustic revelry. Play, musicians! And you, brides and bridegrooms all, with your happiness overflowing its cup, dance."

"Jaques de Boys, sir, just a moment," Jaques said. "If I heard you rightly, Duke Frederick will now lead a religious life as a monk and has cast away life in the glamorous court?"

"That is true," Jaques de Boys replied.

"I will go to him," Jaques said. "He has converted to a religious life, and from converts such as him there is much to be heard and learned."

Jaques said to Duke Senior, "To you I leave your former rank; because of your patience and your virtue, you well deserve it."

Jaques said to Orlando, "To you I leave a love that your true faith truly deserves."

Jaques said to Oliver, "To you I leave your land and love and great allies at the court."

Jaques said to Silvius, "To you I leave a long and well-deserved sex life."

Jaques said to Touchstone, "To you I leave marital argument because the loving part of your marriage will last about two months."

To everyone, Jaques said, "So, enjoy your pleasures. I am for other than for dancing measures. I am melancholy, and I do not dance."

"Stay, Jaques, stay," Duke Senior said.

"I am not the man to enjoy a celebration," Jaques said. "I will stay at your soon-to-be-abandoned cave to hear later whatever you want to say to me."

Jaques left.

Duke Senior said to everyone, "Proceed, proceed. We will begin these marriage rites the same way that we hope that they will end: in true delights."

They danced and celebrated.

## ***EPILOGUE***

The author of this book now whisks you, the reader, back to the year 1600 or so, when Shakespeare was still alive, and when male actors performed the roles of all women in plays.

A young man who has just finished performing the role of Rosalind in *As You Like It* now steps in front of the theatrical curtain and says, “It is not the fashion to see the lady recite the epilogue, but it is no more unbecoming than to see the Lord recite the prologue. If it is true that good wine needs no advertising, then it is true that a good play needs no epilogue. Nevertheless, good wine is advertised, and good plays are made better with the help of good epilogues.

“But I am in a strange position. I do not have a good epilogue, and I cannot ingratiate myself with you in the behalf of a good play!

“I am not costumed like a beggar; therefore, begging will not become me. Instead, I will bewitch you and cast a spell on you.

“I will begin with the women. I command you, women, because you love men, to like as much of this play as pleases you.

“And I command you, men, because you love women — and I see by your smiles that none of you hates women — that between you and the women this play may please.

“If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you men as had beards that pleased me, complexions that I liked, and breaths that were not foul.

“I am sure that the many men who have good beards or good faces or sweet breaths will, for the kind offer I have made, applaud to bid me farewell when I curtsy.”

The male actor curtsies and exits to great applause.

## ***CHAPTER III: The Comedy of Errors***

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

SOLINUS: Duke of Ephesus, an ancient Greek town on the coast of Ionia in what is now Turkey.

EGEON: a merchant of Syracuse, a town in Sicily.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS and ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: twin brothers, and sons to EGEON and EMILIA.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: twin brothers, and slaves of the two ANTIPHOLUSES.

BALTHAZAR: a merchant.

ANGELO: a goldsmith.

FIRST MERCHANT: friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

SECOND MERCHANT: to whom Angelo is a debtor.

PINCH: a schoolmaster and would-be exorcist.

EMILIA: wife to Egeon; an Abbess at Ephesus.

ADRIANA: wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA: Adriana's sister.

LUCE: Kitchen maid to Adriana.

A Courtesan.

Jailer, Officers, Attendants.

SCENE: Ephesus.

Epidamnus: a town on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea between the Italian Peninsula and the Balkan Peninsula.

Epidaurus: a town in Greece at the Saronic Gulf.

The Porcupine: name of the house where the courtesan lives.

The Phoenix: name of the house where Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana live.

The Centaur Inn: name of the inn where Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse stay.

Marks, ducats, angels: units of money.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

In a hall in the palace of Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse, had been sentenced to death unless he could raise a thousand marks to ransom himself. Present were Duke Solinus, Egeon, a jailer, and some police officers and attendants.

Egeon said, "Proceed, Solinus, and kill me. Dying will end all my woes."

The Duke of Ephesus replied, "Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more."

Egeon thought, *If the Duke of Ephesus considers what I just said to be pleading for my life, he must have a guilty conscience. Apparently, he does not like the law that he feels obligated to enforce.*

The Duke of Ephesus continued, "I am not inclined to bend our laws and avoid enforcing them. The enmity and discord that of late has sprung from the rancorous outrage of your Duke of Syracuse to our merchants, who are fair-dealing countrymen of Ephesus, who lacked the money to ransom their lives and therefore paid with their blood his penalty that came from enforcement of his rigorous statutes, ensure that I will allow no pity to replace my threatening looks.

"Because of the deadly quarrels between your seditious countrymen and our citizens of Ephesus, the governments of Ephesus and of Syracuse have forbid by law any traffic or trade between these two cities. Indeed, the penalty for disobeying these laws is severe. If anyone born at Ephesus is seen at any markets and fairs in Syracuse, he will die and his possessions will be forfeited to the Duke of Syracuse unless he can raise a thousand marks to pay the penalty for breaking the law and so save his life. The same is true if anyone born at Syracuse is seen at any markets and fairs in Ephesus.

"Your possessions, valued at the highest rate, are not worth even a hundred marks, and therefore by law you are condemned to die by beheading before the Sun sets."

"Still, I have this comfort," Egeon said. "When I die with the evening Sun, all my woes shall end and be done."

"Well, merchant of Syracuse," the Duke of Ephesus said, "tell us briefly the cause for your leaving your native home in Syracuse and the reason why you came to Ephesus."

Egeon said, "You could not have given me a heavier task than to tell you my griefs, which are unspeakable. Yet, so that the world may witness that my capital punishment has come about because of natural affection and not because of a vile offence, I will tell you about my sorrows. I was born in Syracuse, and I wed a woman who was fortunate except that she married me, but I could have made her happy except that our luck was bad. With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased because of the prosperous voyages that I often made to Epidamnus, a town on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea.

"Unfortunately, my agent in Epidamnus died there and I needed to take care of the goods that were then left untended. I left my wife at Syracuse and sailed to Epidamnus. We were separated and lacked our usual kind embracings for almost six months, but my wife, almost

fainting because of the pleasing punishment that women bear — pregnancy — voyaged to join me at Epidamnus,

“She had not been long there before she became the joyful mother of two good sons — identical twins so alike that they could not be distinguished except by their names. That very hour, and in the same inn, a woman of a low social class was delivered of a similar burden; she gave birth to male twins, both identical. I bought those boys — their parents were very poor — and I brought them up to serve my sons.

“My wife, considerably proud of her two sons, daily asked me to take our family back to our home in Syracuse. Reluctantly, I agreed. This was unfortunate. Too soon, we went aboard a ship. We had sailed only a league — three nautical miles — from Epidamnus, and then the always wind-obeying deep sea began to cause us alarm that we might be in danger. We did not long retain hope that we would be safe. The Heavens allowed us some obscured light to see by, and what we saw gave our fearful minds a dreadful certainty that we would immediately die.

“I myself would gladly have embraced death, but the incessant weeping of my wife, who mourned what she saw must come, and the piteous plaints of the pretty babes, who cried because that is what babies do — they were ignorant of the danger they were in and so did not know enough to be afraid — forced me to seek a way to delay their deaths and mine. This is what we did because we could find no wiser action to do.

“The sailors sought safety by taking the lifeboat and leaving the ship, which was about to sink, with us still aboard. My wife, more careful for the latter-born son — or was he the earlier-born son? — tied him to the end of a small spare mast such as seafaring men keep on board in case storms damage the mast. To our son one of the other twin sons — one of the two slaves — was tied. I myself tied the two remaining boys to the other side of the small spare mast.

“Having secured the children to the mast that would keep them afloat, my wife and I tied ourselves to the mast, one of us at each end. The ship sank, and we floated on the mast with the current, going straight, we thought, to Corinth.

“At length the Sun, gazing upon the Earth, dispersed the rain and fog that obscured our vision. The sea became calm, and we saw two ships from afar sailing straight to us from different directions. One ship I think came from Corinth; the other ship came from Epidaurus. Before they arrived — but let me stop speaking now. Guess what happened from what I have already told you.”

“No, continue to speak, old man,” the Duke of Ephesus said. “Do not stop speaking now. Perhaps we will pity — but not pardon — you.”

Egeon said, “If the gods had pitied us, I would not now with good reason call them merciless to us! Before the two ships, which came from different directions, could travel ten leagues and meet, our floating mast hit a mighty rock with such force that the mast was split in two.

“In this unjust separation, my wife and I were both left with something to take delight in and something to take sorrow in. Her part of the mast was burdened with less weight than mine, but it was not burdened with less woe. The wind swept it away with more speed than it did my part of the mast, and I saw my wife and the two boys with her taken up into the ship carrying fishermen from Corinth, so we thought.

“Later, the other ship — the one from Epidaurus — rescued the other two boys and me. They knew who I was, and they gave an excellent welcome to their shipwrecked guests. They would have relieved the Corinthian fishermen of their catch — my wife and the two boys with her — but the ship from Epidaurus was very slow of sail, and therefore it sailed home to Epidaurus.

“Thus have you heard how I have been separated from happiness. My life of misfortunes has been prolonged, allowing me to tell the sad stories of my own life.”

“For the sake of those whom you mourn,” the Duke of Ephesus said, “do me the favor to tell in full what has befallen your family and you until now.”

“My

” boy — if indeed he is the youngest, for certainly he is the eldest boy in my care,” Egeon said, “at eighteen years of age became curious about his brother. He begged me to allow him and his slave, whose brother had also been lost, to go out into the world and seek their lost brothers. Both of them had been given the names of their lost brothers as a way to honor those lost brothers. I allowed them to go. My sons were now both named Antipholus; the slaves were now both named Dromio. Out of love for and the hope of seeing the son who had been lost, I risked losing the son whom I had saved and raised. I allowed him to travel in search of his brother.

“A few years later, I decided to travel to find my lost son — or sons, as was now the case. I spent five summers traveling in furthest Greece and roaming through Asia and its furthest boundaries. Finally traveling homeward, I came to Ephesus. Here, I had no hope of finding my sons, yet I am loath to leave unsearched this town or any other town or any place where men may dwell.

“But here I must end the story of my life. I would be happy when I die if all my travels had assured me that my twin sons still live.”

The Duke of Ephesus said, “Hapless Egeon, you are a man whom the Fates have marked to bear extreme and dire misfortune! Believe me, were it not against our laws, as well as against my crown, my oath, and my office — Princes may not go against these things, even if they would like to; instead, they must do their duty — my soul would argue in your favor.

“But, although you have been sentenced to die, and a sentence, once passed, may not be repealed without great damage to the Prince’s honor, yet I will help you as much as I can. Therefore, merchant of Syracuse, I will allow you to spend this day raising money with which you can save your life. Go to all the friends you have here in Ephesus. Beg or borrow to raise the money and live. If you are unable to raise the money today, then you are doomed to die tonight. Jailer, keep him in your custody. Go with him as he attempts to raise money.”

The jailer replied, “I will, my lord.”

Egeon thought, *Hopeless and helpless does Egeon wend, but all he is doing is delaying his life’s end.*

— 1.2 —

Three people arrived in the marketplace of Ephesus. They were Antipholus of Syracuse, Dromio of Syracuse, and a merchant who was a friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

The merchant said to Antipholus of Syracuse, “For these reasons, you should say that you are from Epidamnus. If you do not, your possessions and money will be confiscated. This very day a merchant from Syracuse was arrested after he arrived here. Because he does not have enough money to pay the ransom for his life, he will die — as is the law of Ephesus — before the weary Sun sets in the West. Now I return to you your money that you gave to me for safekeeping.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Dromio of Syracuse, “Take this money to the Centaur Inn, where we are staying, and stay there, Dromio, until I come to you. Within an hour, it will be time for the midday meal. Until then, I will view this town, look at the businesses and markets, gaze upon the buildings, and then return and sleep at the inn because I am stiff and weary from our long journey.”

“You have asked me to take this money,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “Many a man would take you at your word, and take the money and run, having so good an opportunity.”

He took the money and exited.

Antipholus of Syracuse said to the merchant, “He is a trustworthy rascal, sir. Very often, when I am tired because of cares and melancholy, he brightens my mood by making merry jests. Will you walk with me about the town, and then go to my inn and dine with me?”

The merchant replied, “I am invited, sir, to visit certain merchants, in business with whom I hope to make considerable profit. Therefore, I beg your pardon, but I cannot eat dinner with you. However, if it is OK with you, at five o’clock, I will meet you at the marketplace and stay with you until bedtime. Because of my business, I must leave you now.”

“Farewell until then,” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “I will go and roam at random, wandering up and down to view the town.”

“Sir, I leave you to your own devices, and I wish you happiness.”

The merchant exited.

“He wishes me happiness,” Antipholus of Syracuse said, “but happiness is the thing I cannot get. As I roam this world, I am like a drop of water that seeks another drop in the ocean. Falling into the ocean in an attempt to find his fellow, the drop of water — unseen by his fellow and inquisitive about his fellow — mingles with the other drops. Like that drop of water, I, unlucky as I attempt to find a mother and a brother, roam everywhere.”

Dromio of Ephesus — not Dromio of Syracuse — now appeared on the scene.

Antipholus of Syracuse saw him and, mistaking him for Dromio of Syracuse, thought, *Here comes the almanac of my true birthdate. When I see him, I know how old I am because he and I were born on the same day.*

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Dromio of Ephesus, “What’s happening? How is it that you have returned so soon?”

“Returned so soon!” Dromio of Ephesus said. “Rather, I have arrived too late. The capon — a castrated rooster — burns, and the pig is so over-cooked that it falls from the spit. The clock has struck twelve upon the bell — it is late for the midday meal! — and my mistress has struck me once upon my cheek. She is so hot because the meat is cold; the meat is cold because you

have not come home; you have not come home because you have no appetite; and you have no stomach because you ate a big breakfast. But we who know what it is to fast and pray — to not eat while praying that you will return home soon so that all of your family can eat together — are paying the penalty for your absence from home today.”

“Stop your windy breath, sir,” Antipholus of Syracuse ordered. “Tell me this, please. Where have you left the money that I gave you?”

“Oh, the sixpence you gave me on Wednesday to pay the saddler for my mistress’ crupper — the strap that goes around the horse’s tail and keeps the saddle from sliding forward? I gave it to the saddler, sir. I did not keep it.”

“I am not in the mood for jokes now,” Antipholus of Syracuse replied. “Tell me, without jokes and without delay, where is the money? We are strangers here, so how dare you allow so great a sum of money out of your sight?”

“Please, sir, joke when you are sitting down and eating dinner. I from my mistress have come to you posthaste. If I return without you, my head shall pay for it indeed. My mistress will treat me like a doorpost on which accounts are chalked up — that is, scored — in a tavern. The scores are marks, and my mistress will hit me and score a mark upon my head. Really, I think that your stomach, like mine, should be your clock, and should tell you when to strike out for home without the necessity of being sent a messenger.”

“Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season; this is not the right time for such jokes. Reserve your jokes for a merrier hour than this. Where is the gold that I entrusted to you?”

“Entrusted to me, sir? Why, you gave no gold to me.”

“Come on, Sir Rascal, stop your foolishness, and tell me what you have done with the money that I put you in charge of.”

“My only charge has been to fetch you from the marketplace to the Phoenix, which is the name of your home, and a very good name it is, sir, to eat dinner. My mistress and her sister are waiting for you.”

“Tell me in what safe place you have deposited my money,” Antipholus of Syracuse said, “or I shall break that merry head of yours that keeps telling me jokes that I am not in the mood to hear. Where are the thousand marks that I gave to you?”

“I have some marks you made on my head,” Dromio of Ephesus said, “and I have some marks my mistress made on my shoulders, but between the beatings I have received from the two of you I do not have a thousand marks. If I should return to your worship those particular marks, perhaps you would not bear them patiently.”

“Your mistress’ marks? What mistress — what female boss — do you have?”

“Your worship’s wife, my mistress at the Phoenix, your home. She is hungry because she is fasting until you come home to dinner, and she really wishes that you would hurry home to dinner.”

“What! Will you mock me to my face even after I have forbidden you to make jokes? There, take that, you rascal.”

Antipholus of Syracuse took off his hat and started hitting Dromio of Ephesus with it. Both Antipholuses used their hats to hit their slaves. Both hats were made of a soft material and did not cause pain or leave a mark. Both Dromios screamed when they were hit with a hat because they loved to make noise and exaggerate and complain. The wife of Antipholus of Ephesus also caused no pain when she hit Dromio of Ephesus.

“What do you mean by this, sir?” Dromio shouted. “For God’s sake, hold your hands and stop hitting me! If you will not, then I will take to my heels and run away!”

He ran away.

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “Upon my life, by some trick or other, this rascal has had all my money taken from him — by a cheat, no doubt. People say that this town of Ephesus is full of con men — nimble jugglers who deceive the eye, dark-working sorcerers who manipulate men’s minds, soul-killing witches who deform the body, disguised cheaters, fast-talking mountebanks, and many similar engagers in sin. If that is true, it is a good reason to leave Ephesus all the sooner. I’ll go to the Centaur Inn and look for Dromio. I greatly fear my money is not safe.”

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

In front of the house of Antipholus of Ephesus, his wife, who was named Adriana, and her sister, who was named Luciana, spoke together.

“Neither my husband nor the slave has returned,” Adriana said. “I sent Dromio to quickly find his master. Surely, Luciana, it is two o’clock now.”

“Perhaps some merchant invited your husband to eat with him, and from the marketplace he’s gone somewhere to dinner on business. Good sister, let us dine and not worry about your husband. A man is master of his liberty as far as the women in his life are concerned; he comes and goes as he pleases. But when it comes to business, time is their master, and they come and go as their business demands of them. Chances are, your husband is attending to his business, so be patient, sister.”

“Why should men have more liberty than women do?”

“Because their business always lies out of doors. They do not do their business at home.”

Adriana said, “Look, whenever I act the way that he is acting now, he gets mad at me.”

“He is your husband. He is the bridle of your will. A wife should obey her husband.”

“Only asses should have such a bridle.”

“Why, headstrong liberty is lashed with woe,” Luciana said. “There’s nothing under Heaven that men do not have dominion over, whether it is on land, in the sea, or in the sky. The female beasts, the female fishes, and the female winged fowls are their males’ subjects; they are subjected to the males’ control. Men, who are more divine than women because God created Adam before Eve and because God created Eve from the rib of Adam, are the masters of all these beasts, fish, and fowl. Men are the lords of the wide world and the wild watery seas. Men are endowed with intellectual sense and souls. Men have more preeminence than fish and fowls. Men are the masters and lords of their females. Therefore, you should obey your husband.”

“This servitude of women to men is the reason you stay unwed,” Adriana said.

“No, not this servitude,” Luciana said. “Instead, I stay unwed because of the troubles of the marriage bed. I am not so much worried about obeying my husband, when I have one, as I am worried about my husband being unhappy and taking his unhappiness to bed. I am worried about him being unfaithful to me.”

“But, if you were wedded, you would have some sway — some influence — over your husband.”

“Before I learn to love a husband, I will learn how to obey a husband and make him happy.”

“What would you do if your husband were to veer off the course of a stable marriage and start to pursue another woman?”

“I would endure it patiently until he returned to his true course and came home.”

“If you could stay unmoved by your husband’s infidelity, that would indeed be patience!” Adriana said. “It is no marvel that you are waiting to marry. Such meekness can be practiced while you have no cause not to be meek. A wretched soul, bruised with adversity, we tell to be quiet when we hear it cry. But were we burdened with a similar weight of pain, as much or more would we ourselves complain. Therefore, you — who have no unkind husband to make you grieve — would relieve my grief by urging me to be patient and enduring. But if you live to be married to an unkind husband, you will reject and leave behind you the foolish patience you advise me now to have.”

“Well, I will marry one day and then I can put my ideas into practice,” Luciana said.

She looked up and said, “Here comes your man Dromio now. Your husband must be near.”

Adriana asked Dromio of Ephesus, “Is your tardy master now close at hand?”

“His two hands have been very close to me — my two ears are witness to that,” he replied. “They have been boxed.”

“Did you talk to him? Did he tell you what he intends to do? Do you know what is in his mind?” Adriana asked.

“He spoke his mind upon my ears,” Dromio of Ephesus said. “Ask not for whom the hands told — they tolled blows upon my ears the way that the tongue of a bell tolls with blows. Damn his hands — I could scarcely hear the words he spoke and understand them.”

Luciana asked, “Did he speak ambiguously, and so you could not understand his meaning?”

“No, he struck my ears so plainly that I could feel his blows very well. But he hit me so dreadfully that I could not understand what he was saying because I could not stand up under his blows.”

“Please tell me,” Adriana said, “whether he is coming home. It would seem that he would have a good reason for you to tell me if he is not coming home.”

“He has a good reason indeed, mistress,” Dromio said. “He is horn-mad.”

“Horn-mad, you rascal!” Adriana said. “Are you saying that I have been unfaithful and cuckolded him and given him horns?”

“I do not mean that he is cuckold-mad. I mean that he is horn-mad in the sense of a horned beast such as a bull or stag that is so angry that it charges people and tries to hurt them with its horns. It is certain that he is stark raving mad. When I asked him to come home to dinner, he asked me for a thousand marks in gold. This conversation ensued:

“‘It is dinnertime,’ quoth I.

“‘My gold!’ quoth he.

“‘Your meat does burn,’ quoth I.

“‘My gold!’ quoth he.

“‘Will you come home?’ quoth I.

“‘My gold!’ quoth he. ‘Where is the thousand marks I gave you, villain?’

“‘The pig,’ quoth I, ‘is burned.’

“‘My gold!’ quoth he.

“‘My mistress, sir,’ quoth I.

“‘To Hell with your mistress! I do not know your mistress; damn your mistress!’”

“Quoth whom?” Luciana asked.

“Quoth my master — your sister’s husband,” Dromio replied. ‘I know,’ quoth he, ‘no house, no wife, no mistress.’ I had thought that if he did not come home that he would give me a message to deliver to you with my tongue, but the only message I have brought home is the one that I carry on my shoulders — that is where he beat me.”

“Go back to him, rascal, and bring him home,” Adriana ordered.

“Go back again, and be beaten and sent home again? For God’s sake, send some other messenger.”

“Go back, slave, or I will hit you across your head,” Adriana said.

“And he will bless that cross by giving me another beating across my head. Between you I shall have a holy head. In fact, if you two hit me hard enough, my head will be full of holes.”

“Go now, prating peasant!” Adriana said. “Fetch your master home.” She made a motion as if she were going to kick Dromio.

“Am I so round with you as you are with me, that like you would a soccer ball you must spurn me with your foot? You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither. If I am to last in this service, you must encase me in leather for my protection.”

Dromio exited.

Luciana said, “Your impatience really shows in your face right now.”

“My husband favors his female tramps with his presence,” Adriana said, “while I stay at home and starve for lack of his merry looks and company. Has increasing age taken my former alluring beauty from my poor cheeks and replaced it with homeliness? If so, then my husband has wasted my beauty by ignoring me. Are my discourses dull? Is my wit barren? Am I unable to say interesting things? If my former voluble and sharp discourse is marred, it is my husband’s unkindness that blunts it more than ever hard marble could. Do his female tramps entice him with their gay and pretty clothing? It is his fault that I do not have better clothing to wear — he controls my household expenses.

“The faults that are found in me are faults that he caused. He is the reason for my ruin. He could easily and quickly restore my decayed beauty with a sunny look, but he is an unruly deer — like a deer that breaks out of its enclosure, he breaks out of the walls of his home and eats away from home.

“Poor me! He does not treat me like he should treat his wife — he treats me as if I were a laughingstock! I can imagine his female tramps and him laughing at me!”

“This is self-harming jealousy,” Luciana said. “Get rid of it.”

“Unfeeling fools can easily get rid of such jealousy,” Adriana said. “They do not feel the pain that I feel. I know my husband’s eyes feast on other women outside our home; otherwise, he would be here right now. Sister, you know that my husband promised to give me a necklace. I would gladly give up the necklace if my husband would be faithful to me!

“An enameled piece of jewelry can lose its beauty, yet the gold in it will remain valuable. This is true of aging husbands and wives. Unfortunately, others can touch the gold, and if the gold is often touched, the gold can wear away, thus making the jewelry less valuable. Similarly, a man can be touched if he gives in to temptation, thus making the man less valuable. No man who has a good reputation should shame it with falsehoods and corruption. I believe that my husband is golden, but he is allowing his female tramps to wear away his gold. Because my beauty can no longer please my husband’s eyes, I’ll weep what’s left of my beauty away, and die as I weep.”

*How many fond fools serve mad jealousy! Luciana thought. Adriana is fond of her husband, and she suffers from excessive jealousy.*

— 2.2 —

Standing in a public place, Antipholus of Syracuse said, “The gold I gave to Dromio has been safely deposited at the Centaur Inn and the heedful, competent slave has wandered forth to seek me. By my own calculation and the information I received from the inn’s host, I do not see how it is possible for me to have so recently seen Dromio — there simply has not been enough time. This is puzzling, but it did happen. I see Dromio coming toward me now.”

Dromio of Syracuse walked up to him.

“How are you now, sir?” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “Is your merry mood altered? If you love beatings, jest with me again. You never heard of the Centaur Inn? You never received gold from me? Your female boss sent you to bring me home to dinner? My home is named the Phoenix? Were you insane when you said such things to me?”

“What?” Dromio of Syracuse said. “When did I ever say such things?”

“You said these things to me just now, right here, not half an hour ago.”

“I have not seen you since you sent me from here to go to the Centaur Inn with the gold you gave me.”

“Rascal, you denied ever having received gold from me, and you told me that you had a female boss and that she had a dinner waiting for me. I hope that your head, which I beat, felt that I was displeased.”

“I am glad to see you in this merry mood,” Dromio of Syracuse said, “but what do you mean by this jest? Please, master, tell me.”

“Do you think I am joking? Do you mock me to my face? Here, take this, and take that!”

Antipholus of Syracuse took off his hat and struck Dromio of Syracuse twice.

“Stop, sir, for God’s sake! Now your joke has turned serious. Why are you beating me? This is not part of any bargain that I made.”

“Why am I beating you? Sometimes I am in a good mood and I let you be my jester and make jokes and engage in fun conversation. But you are so saucy that you go too far and make jokes when I am in a serious mood. You even treat my hours for serious work as if they were happy hours at a public tavern.

“Remember this proverb: When the Sun shines, let foolish gnats make sport, but let them creep in crannies when the Sun hides its beams. In other words, there is a right time for all things. There is a right time for jokes, and there is a right time for serious business. If you want to jest with me, look at my face and determine my mood. Once you know my mood, you can fashion your behavior so that it is appropriate for my mood. If you do not take my advice, I will beat my advice into your sconce.”

“Sconce?” Dromio of Syracuse said. “You are using the word ‘sconce’? Showing off your vocabulary, are you? Although I am only a slave, I know that sconce has three meanings. One, it can mean a head. Two, it can mean a small fort. Three, it can mean a protective screen. If you should stop beating me as if you were using a battering ram against a fortress, I would prefer ‘sconce’ to mean a head. But if you continue to beat me, I must get a sconce — a small fort — to protect my head and ensconce my head with a protective screen for further protection. Otherwise, you will beat my head into my shoulders. But, sir, why are you beating me?”

“Don’t you know?”

“All I know, sir, is that you are beating me.”

“Shall I tell you why I am beating you?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Yes, sir, and tell me wherefore, for they say every why has a wherefore.”

“Let me explain the ‘why’ first. I am beating you because you mocked me. Now let me explain the ‘wherefore.’ I am beating you because you mocked me a second time.”

“Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season, when the ‘why’ and the ‘wherefore’ have neither rhyme nor reason? I don’t think that any man has ever been beaten for less reason than I have been today. Well, sir, I thank you.”

“Thank me for what?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“I thank you because you gave me something for nothing.”

“I will make that up to you by giving you nothing for something, but isn’t it time for the midday meal?”

“No, sir,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “It can’t be time for dinner. If it were time, the meat would be ready, but it lacks something that I have.”

“What is that?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Tenderizing.”

“The best way to tenderize a steak is to beat it with a meat mallet. If the meat has not been tenderized, then it will be tough.”

“If it is tough, sir, I beg you not to eat it.”

“What is your reason?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“If you try to eat tough steak, it might make you angry, and then you would tenderize me.”

“Dromio, learn the right time to make a joke. There’s a right time for all things.”

“I would have dared to deny that that is true — before you became so angry at me.”

“By what rule of logic and argumentation would you deny that?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“I would deny it, master, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of Father Time himself.”

“Let’s hear your reasoning.”

“There is no right time that a man who grows bald naturally — from old age — can recover his hair. Therefore, there is not a time for everything.”

“Couldn’t he recover his hair by fine and recovery? That is a way for men to get legal possession of property.”

“Yes, master, a man can pay a fine fee for a wig and thus recover the lost hair of another man. The best wigs are made from real hair.”

“Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as hair is, so plentiful an outgrowth?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Hair is a blessing that Father Time bestows on furry beasts; what Father Time has scanted men in hair he has given them in intelligence.”

“Objection! Many men have more hair than intelligence.”

“Men who have more hair than intelligence still have enough intelligence to lose their hair. They pursue the wrong kind of women, catch syphilis, and lose their hair as a consequence of the disease.”

“Didn’t you just now conclude that hairy men are straightforward, candid plain dealers who lack the intelligence needed to be deceptive and engage in fraudulent behavior?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Plain dealers take what is called the direct approach with women, sir. Their idea of flirting is to say ‘Fancy a f\*\*k?’ The plainer the dealer, the quicker he is to catch syphilis and lose his hair. At least he has a policy in mind when he grows bald.”

“What is the reason for the policy?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“There are two reasons, sir, and they are sound reasons.”

“Sound?” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “I doubt it.”

“Sure reasons, then.”

“Nope. I am still doubtful. I suspect a falsehood.”

“Certain ones then.”

“Name them, and let’s see if they are certain,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

“The first reason is the money he will save in haircuts, and the second reason is that no longer will a hair fall into his soup.”

“All this time you have tried to prove that not everything has a right time,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

“Yes, and I did prove that, sir. There is no right time — or any time at all — that a man who grows bald naturally can recover his hair.”

“But your reasoning was not substantial; why, the reasoning is so off that your debating opponents have no time to recover from your arguments because your opponents are stunned by your arguments’ silliness.”

“Therefore, I will improve my argument: Time himself is bald and therefore until the world ends Time will have bald followers. Anyone who follows Father Time will grow old and will grow bald.”

“I knew you would have a bald conclusion,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

He looked up and said, “Look! Two women — I don’t know who they are — are beckoning for us to go over to them.”

A wondering look on his face, Antipholus of Syracuse, accompanied by Dromio of Syracuse, walked over to the two women, who were Adriana and Luciana.

“Yes, Antipholus, look at me as if I were a stranger and frown at me,” Arianna said. “Some other woman has your looks of love. Pretend that I am not Adriana and pretend that I am not your wife. At one time, without being urged, you would spend time with me. You would tell me that words were never music to your ear unless I had spoken them. You would tell me that an object was never pleasing to your eye unless I had shown it to you. You would tell me that a touch was never welcome to your hand unless I was holding hands with you. You would tell me that meat was never tasty unless I had carved the meat for you.

“How did it come to be, husband, that you are now estranged from yourself? You and I are married, and in marriage two become one. You and I are one undividable whole, incorporate. By being joined with you, I am better than I would be by myself alone. How then can you regard me as a stranger? I am part of you, and the two of us make up you. Do not try to tear yourself away from me! Know, my love, you can separate the two of us as easily as you can put a drop of water into the churning sea and take out that exact drop of water, with nothing added to it or taken away from it. If you try to take me out of yourself, you will find the task impossible because we are one being, not two.

“It would hurt me deeply and touch me to the quick if you were ever to hear that I were licentious and that this body, which is consecrated to you, had been contaminated by ruffian lust! If that should ever happen, wouldn’t you spit at me and kick me and scream at me that I am married to you? The forehead reveals character — wouldn’t you tear the stained skin from my harlot’s brow and tear my wedding ring from my finger and break my wedding ring with a deep vow of divorce?

“I know that you are capable of doing those things, and therefore I believe that you would do those things. You should know that in fact I have been stained by adultery; my blood has been mingled with the sin of lust. What do I mean by this? You and I are one, and if you commit adultery, then I am contaminated by the adultery you committed — the poison of your adultery infects my blood, and that contamination makes me a whore. Therefore, if you keep your marriage vows and sleep in the bed of the wife you married, I will live unstained and you will live without dishonor.”

“Why are you saying these things to me, pretty woman?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked. “I do not know you. I have been in Ephesus for only two hours. This town and your conversation are both strange to me. I have heard every word you said to me, but I do not understand even one word of what you have said.”

Luciana said, “For shame, brother-in-law! You have changed! When have you ever treated my sister like this! She sent Dromio to you to bring you home for dinner.”

“She sent Dromio to me?”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “She sent me?”

Adriana said, “Yes, I sent you, Dromio. And when you returned from seeing him, you said that he had beaten you, and as he was beating you, he said that he did not live in this house and he said that I was not his wife.”

Antipholus of Syracuse asked Dromio of Syracuse, “Did you talk, sir, with this gentlewoman? Are you confederates with her? What plot did you two form?”

“I talk to her, sir?” Dromio of Syracuse replied. “I have never even seen her until now!”

“Rascal, you are lying,” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “I know that you are lying because you earlier said to me in the marketplace exactly the things that she said she told you to say to me.”

“I have never spoken to her in my entire life.”

“How then is it possible that she knows our names and calls us by them? Is she perhaps clairvoyant?”

Adriana said to Antipholus of Syracuse, “You are supposed to be a serious man, yet you conspire disgustingly with your slave to deceive me and make me angry! Perhaps I must suffer because of your estrangement from me, but do not make that wrong worse by treating me with contempt.

“I will hold on to your sleeve. You, my husband, are a strong elm tree. I, your wife, am a weak vine. Although I am weak, I am married to your strength, and therefore I share your strength. If anything possesses you except me, it is dross; it is usurping, parasitic ivy, a brier, or worthless moss that, because it has not been cut off, infects your sap and lives by harming you.”

Antipholus of Syracuse thought, *She is talking to me. She is talking about me. Was I married to her in a dream? Am I dreaming now and thinking that I am hearing all of this? What error is making our — her and my — eyes and ears behave this way? Until I know for sure what is happening, I will pretend that this delusion is reality.*

Luciana ordered, “Dromio, go and tell the servants to set the table for dinner.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “I wish I had my rosary beads! At least I — sinner that I am — can cross myself. This is the fairyland! Oh, spite of spites! We are talking with goblins, changelings, and sprites. Unless we obey them, this will ensue: Witches in the form of owls will suck away our breath, or fairies will pinch us black and blue.”

Luciana said, “Why are you talking to yourself and not answering me? Dromio, the Greek word *dromeos* means runner, but you are a drone, a snail, a slug, a foolish blockhead!”

“I have been transformed, master, haven’t I?” Dromio of Syracuse asked.

“I think that your mind has been transformed in some way, and so has mine.”

“Master, I think that I have been transformed both in mind and in body.”

“You still have your own body.”

“No, I am sure that I have not. I am an ape. I am a counterfeit — or perhaps I am a fool. Or I am both.”

Luciana said, “If you have been changed into anything, then you have been changed into an ass.”

“That is true,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “She rides me — she teases and criticizes me. And I long for grass — I long to go to pasture and be relieved of responsibility and have freedom. If I were not an ass, then I would know her as well as she knows me.”

Adriana said, “Let us stop this foolishness. I decline to act like a foolish child and weep while my husband and his slave laugh at all my sorrows.”

She said to Antipholus of Syracuse, “Come, sir, let us go in our house and eat.”

She said, “Dromio, keep the door.”

She added, “Husband, I’ll dine upstairs with you today and listen to your confession of a thousand idle pranks.”

She said to Dromio of Syracuse, “If anyone asks you for your master, say that he is dining away from home and let no one enter the house. We do not want to be disturbed.”

She said to Luciana, “Come, sister.”

She finished by saying, “Dromio, do your job as doorkeeper well.”

Antipholus of Syracuse thought, *Am I on Earth, in Heaven, or in Hell? Am I sleeping or waking? Am I insane or in my right mind? Do these people know me and I don’t know myself? I’ll say as they say and do as they do and continue in this course of action despite all the confusion. I will continue in this course of action no matter what are the risks and consequences.*

Dromio of Syracuse asked him, “Master, shall I be the porter at the door? Shall I be the doorkeeper?”

Adriana answered for him, “Yes, and let no one enter, lest I break your pate — your head.”

Luciana said, “Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.”

They left to eat dinner.

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

Before the house of Antipholus of Ephesus were standing Antipholus of Ephesus; Dromio of Ephesus; Angelo, who was a goldsmith of Ephesus; and Balthazar, who was a merchant of Ephesus.

“Good Signior Angelo, please excuse us,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “My wife is shrewish when I come home late. Please say that I lingered with you at your shop so that I could see you make her necklace. Also, please say that you will bring it here tomorrow. But look here at my slave. He is a rascal who would impudently swear that he met me in the marketplace and that I beat him, and that I said I had given him a thousand marks in gold, and that I denied that I was married to my wife and lived in my house.”

He said to Dromio of Ephesus, “You drunkard, what did you mean by saying all of this?”

“Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know. I know that you beat me in the marketplace. I can prove it with evidence from your own hand. If my skin were made of parchment, and the blows you gave me were ink, your own handwriting on my back and shoulders would tell you what I think.”

“I know what I think: I think you are an ass,” Antipholus of Ephesus said.

“Indeed, judging from the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear, it does appear that I am an ass. I should kick back when I am kicked. If I would do that when I am in such a predicament, you would keep away from my heels and beware of this ass.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “You’re solemn, Signior Balthazar. I pray to God that our entertainment and meal will show you my good will toward you and that you are welcome here.”

“Your welcome and friendship are much more valuable to me than your most excellent delicacies,” Balthazar replied.

“Signior Balthazar, whether one is served flesh or fish, a hearty welcome is not a substitute for a good meal. A hearty welcome cannot make up for a bad meal. As we know, a hearty welcome is not the equal of even one good course.”

“Good food, sir, is common,” Balthazar said. “Every man can provide that.”

“And a good welcome is even more common than good food,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “All that is required for a good welcome is words.”

“A little food and a great big welcome makes a merry feast,” Balthazar said.

“Yes, to a niggardly host, and to a guest who eats less than the host, but though my food is mean, eat it with my best wishes for you,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “You may eat better food elsewhere, but it will not be served to you with a better heart than mine.”

He tried to open the door of his house, but it would not budge. He said, “That’s odd. My door is locked. Dromio, call for someone to unlock the door and let us in.”

Dromio called, "Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cichel, Gillian, Ginn!"

Antipholus of Ephesus was a successful man with many servants.

Dromio of Syracuse, who was serving as porter, called from inside the house, "Blockhead, drudge, cuckold, fool, idiot, clown! Either go away, or shut up! Are you trying to use a spell to get women by calling the names of so many? One woman is one too many. Go, get away from the door."

Dromio of Ephesus said, "Which fool has been made our porter? My master is out here waiting in the street."

Dromio of Syracuse said, "Let him walk from here to wherever he came from — that will keep his feet from growing cold."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "Who is talking from inside my house? Whoever you are, open the door!"

"Right, sir," Dromio of Syracuse replied. "I will tell you when I will open the door after you tell me a good reason why I should open the door."

"Why should you open the door? You should open the door so that I can eat my dinner. I have not eaten today."

"You will not eat here today," Dromio of Syracuse replied. "Come again — when you are invited."

"Who are you who is keeping me out of my own house — the house I own?"

"Right now, I have the job of the porter, sir, and my name is Dromio."

"Rascal!" Dromio of Ephesus exclaimed. "You have stolen both my job and my name. The one never got me credit; the other always got me much blame. If you had been Dromio today in my place in the marketplace, you would have changed your job as porter for that of a target for blows and you would have changed your name of Dromio to the name of Ass. To have avoided that fate, you would have to have changed your face from that of mine or have changed your name from Dromio to another human name to avoid being beaten like an ass."

Antipholus of Syracuse started to bang on the door.

Luce, a servant to Adriana, now arrived and said, "What a turmoil I hear! Dromio, who are these people banging on the door?"

Dromio of Ephesus recognized Luce's voice and said, "Let my master in, Luce."

Luce replied, "No, your master comes too late. Tell your master that."

She knew that the meal had already been served and was being eaten. She also thought that her master was upstairs eating, not growing angry outside the door.

"I have to laugh at that," Dromio of Ephesus said. "Let me have at you with some words: Shall I come in with my staff? Shall I make myself at home?"

"Let me have at you with some other words," Luce replied. "When should you come in? Can you tell? The answer is never. If you come in here, you will need more than just a staff — you

will need an entire army.”

From inside the house, Dromio of Syracuse said, “Luce — if your name is Luce — you have answered him well.”

Antipholus of Ephesus yelled, “Can you hear, minion? Let us in! Please?”

Luce replied, “I have already answered your question with my own questions: ‘When should you come in? Can you tell?’”

Dromio of Syracuse said to Luce, “You have already answered the question: ‘The answer is never.’”

Antipholus of Ephesus pounded on the door.

Dromio of Ephesus said, “Well struck! You answered a verbal blow from Luce with a physical blow on the door.”

Antipholus of Ephesus yelled, “Luce, you baggage, you good-for-nothing woman, let me in.”

“Let you in? Says who?” Luce yelled.

“Master, knock hard on the door,” Dromio of Ephesus said.

“Let him knock until the door aches,” Luce yelled.

Antipholus of Ephesus yelled, “You’ll regret this, minion, if I beat the door down.”

Luce replied, “Not likely, since we have a pair of stocks in this town. The police will put you in the stocks, and *I* will torment *you*.”

Hearing all the racket, Adriana arrived and said, “Who is it at the door who keeps making all this noise?”

From inside the house, Dromio of Syracuse replied, “Truly, your town is troubled with unruly fellows.”

“Is that you, wife?” Antipholus said. “I wish that you had arrived earlier.”

Adriana, thinking that her husband was upstairs eating dinner, said, “Your wife, Sir Rascal! Go and get away from the door! Get out of here!”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “If Sir Rascal is sent away in pain, then I — a regular rascal — will indeed suffer sorely.”

“Here is neither a meal, sir, nor a welcome,” Angelo said. “We would be happy to have either.”

Balthazar said, “We have been debating whether good food or a good welcome is better, but it looks like we shall depart with neither.”

“Your guests are standing at the door, master,” Dromio of Ephesus said cheekily. “Tell them that they are welcome in your home.”

“There is something in the wind — some reason why we cannot get in,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “Something is wrong.”

“Something in the wind?” Dromio of Ephesus said. “That would be us. You would know that a cold wind is blowing if your clothing were made of thinner material. Your food inside the house is warm, but you are standing out here in the cold. It makes a man as angry as a mad-horn horned buck to be so treated.”

Antipholus of Ephesus ordered, “Go and fetch me some tool that I can use to break down the door.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “Break anything here, and I’ll break your rascally head.”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “A man may break a word with you, sir, and words are but wind, and therefore I will break wind in your face and not in a direction away from you.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “It seems that you want your head broken. Damn you, rascal!”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “I am spending way too much time in the great out of doors — let me in! Please!”

Dromio of Syracuse replied, “Yes, I will let you in — when fowls have no feathers and fish have no fins.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Dromio of Ephesus, “Well, I’ll break in. Go and borrow a crowbar.”

Dromio of Ephesus willfully misunderstood what his master had said: “A crow bare? A crow without feathers? Master, do you mean it? For every fish without a fin, there’s a fowl without a feather. If a crow bare will get us inside the house, we will pluck a crow together. Once we are inside the house, then that Dromio and this Dromio can settle our argument.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Stop fooling around! Go! Bring back an iron crowbar.”

“Be patient, sir,” Balthazar said. “Don’t break down your own door. If you do, you will harm your reputation and you will make people suspect that your wife has disobeyed you and dishonored you. So far, her reputation as a wife has been excellent. Consider this: You have long known that your wife is wise, that she is sober and virtuous, and that she is mature and modest. Because of this, you should conclude that she has a good reason — unknown to you right now — for locking the door and keeping you out of your own house. This reason she will explain to you later.

“Take my advice. Depart quietly now, and let all of us go and eat dinner at the Tiger Inn. Around evening, return — alone — to your house and talk to your wife about why she locked the door against you. If you use your strong hands to break down the door now, you will cause rumors to be spread by crowds of people. So far, your reputation is unblemished. Keep it that way, or people will remember the day you broke your own door down — and they will remember it even when you die. Gossip spreads from person to person to person, and everyone who hears the gossip remembers it.”

“You are right,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “I will leave quietly. Although I am in no mood to be merry, and my wife obviously does not want me to be merry, I will change my mood — with effort — and stop being angry and instead be merry. I know a courtesan who converses well and excellently. She is pretty and witty; she is wild and yet she is gentle. We will dine with her.

“My wife has often accused me — unjustly — of having an affair with this woman whom I am talking about, but I swear that I am faithful to my wife and that I have never slept with this woman although I like looking at and talking to her. I would tell you if I had slept with her — we are all guys here, and the story would be a good one to tell in the locker room if I were the kind of man who has affairs. We will go to her house for dinner.”

He said to Angelo, “Go to your home and fetch the necklace — it should be finished by this time. Bring it to the Porcupine, which is the name of the courtesan’s home. If for no other reason than to spite my wife, I will give the necklace to the courtesan. Good sir, make haste. Since my own door refuses to open up for me, I’ll knock elsewhere and see if that door will disdain me.”

“I’ll meet you at the Porcupine an hour or so from now,” Angelo said.

“Please do,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “This jest at my wife’s expense shall also cost me some expense.”

— 3.2 —

Luciana and Antipholus of Syracuse had finished dining with her sister, Adriana, and now they were talking together.

Luciana said to Antipholus of Syracuse, whom she thought was married to her sister, “Is it possible that you have forgotten the duty of a husband? Antipholus, this is still the spring of your love for Adriana. Have the roots of your love for her started to rot so early? Shall a love that should vigorously grow instead lie in ruins? If you wed my sister only because of her wealth, then for the sake of her wealth treat her with more kindness.

“If you like another woman, then like that woman stealthily and not openly. Conceal your false love by acting in such a way that my sister is blind to it. Do not let my sister look at you and know by looking at you that you like another woman. Make sure that your tongue does not speak of the other woman. Look sweetly at my sister, treat my sister well, and mask your infidelity by appearing to be faithful. Although you engage in vice, appear to be the friend of virtue. Look as if you are a good husband, even though another woman has tainted your heart. Teach sin to appear like a holy saint. Be unfaithful to my sister in secret — she need not know. Why should a thief brag about his crimes? It is a double sin to be unfaithful in bed and to let your wife know during dinner that you are unfaithful. A sinful, shameful man can have a good reputation if he acts discreetly, but a bad deed becomes doubly bad when done indiscreetly.

“We poor women! We are trusting. We easily believe that you love us. You may like another woman in your heart, but as long as outward appearances make it seem that you love us, you can control us as you wish and we will orbit you the way that a planet orbits the Sun. Therefore, gentle brother-in-law, go inside the house again. Comfort my sister, cheer her up, and call her your wife. Tell some white lies and flatter her — the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.”

“Sweet mistress,” Antipholus of Syracuse said, “I do not know your name, and I do not know by what miracle you know my name. Your knowledge and your grace are the equal of the wonders of the divine Earth.

“Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak. My understanding is Earth-bound and smothered in errors; it is feeble, shallow, and weak. Reveal to me the hidden meaning of your

words, which accuse me of deceit. My soul is pure and guiltless, and yet you are accusing me of marital infidelity — something that I have never been guilty of; after all, I am not married. Are you a goddess? Are you trying to make me into something that I am not? Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield. I am willing to change in order to please you.

“But if I am who I think I am, then I know well that your weeping sister is not my wife. I am not married to her, and I owe no allegiance to her wedding bed. I am inclined to love you far, far more than I am to love her.

“Sweet mermaid — sweet Siren — do not sing a song that will drown me in your sister's flood of tears. Sing a song that will encourage me to love you, and I will madly dote on you. Spread your golden hairs over the silver waves, and maiden, I will lie on your hair as if it were a bed. In that glorious daydream, I would think that death would be a benefit if I could die — while having an orgasm — in your lap. True love is light and therefore floats. You inspire love in me, and true love is the kind of love I hope that you inspire.

“But if you are a Siren urging me on to my destruction here in Ephesus, this town of magic, then the love you inspire in me is false and I hope that the false love will sink and drown.”

Luciana said, “Are you insane? You must be, if you can think such thoughts!”

“I am not mad, but I am amazed and I hope to be mated — with you, the woman whom I love. How all of these things are occurring here in Ephesus, I do not know.”

“You have a fault that your eyes have caused,” Luciana said, thinking, *He has fallen in love with me because he thinks that I am beautiful. This is lust, not true love. He is married to my sister!*

“My eyes have been blinded by the sunny beams of your beauty,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

“Gaze at the beauty of the woman you should gaze at, and all will be well. Gaze at my sister.”

“It is as good to close one's eyes, sweet love, as to look on night.”

“Do not call me your love. Call my sister your love.”

“I will call your sister's sister my love.”

“My family has three daughters, one of whom lives far away. My sister's sister is my sister.”

“Your sister's sister is you, and you are the better part of my own self. You are my eye's clearer eye and my dear heart's dearer heart. You are my food, my fortune, and the goal of my sweet hope. You are my only Heaven on Earth, and you make me believe in Heaven hereafter.”

“All this is what my sister is to you — or should be.”

“Call yourself your sister, sweetheart, because I am one with you. I will love you and I will spend my life with you. You have no husband, and I have no wife. Give me your hand.”

“Wait! Stay here. I will go and get my sister. I want to know what she thinks of all this, and I want her to know that I am behaving properly. I value her opinion of me.”

As Luciana exited, Dromio of Syracuse ran up to Antipholus of Syracuse, who asked, “How are you, Dromio? Why are you running so fast?”

“Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio? Am I your slave? Am I myself?”

“You are Dromio, you are my slave, you are yourself.”

“I am an ass, I am a woman’s man, and I am besides myself.”

“Which woman’s man are you, and how are you besides yourself?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“I am besides myself because I am owed to a woman — one who claims me, one who haunts me, one who will have me.”

“What claim does she have on you?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“The claim she has on me is like the claim you would have on a horse — she says that she owns me. This is beastly. I do not mean that I am a beast, but I do mean that that beastly woman is laying claim to me.”

“Who is she?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“She is a very reverent body — no one can talk about her without apologizing to God for the foul language necessary to describe her. I have only lean luck in this wedding match, and yet she makes her part of it a wondrously fat marriage.”

“What do you mean by a fat marriage?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Sir, she is the kitchen wench and she is all grease; I don’t know what to do with her except to make a lamp of her and run away from her by the light she will make. I bet that the rags she wears and the tallow in them will burn for the length of a harsh winter in Poland. If she lives until doomsday, she will burn a week longer than the whole world.”

“What complexion does she have?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Swarthy, like my shoe, but her face is not kept half as clean. She sweats so much that you would be up to your ankles in perspiration.”

“That’s a fault that soap and water will mend.”

“No, sir. Her dirt is too engrained. Noah’s flood could not clean her face.”

“What’s her name?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Nell. ‘Ell’ with an ‘n’ in front. Her name is fitting because she is more than an ell. Her name and three quarters — that’s an ell and three quarters of an ell — will not measure her from hip to hip. Remember, please, that an ell is forty-five inches.”

“So she bears some breadth?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“She is no longer from head to foot than from hip to hip; she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out the locations of countries by looking at her.”

“In what part of her body stands Ireland?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“In her buttocks. I found Ireland’s bogs by looking at Nell’s spongy, boggy backside.”

“Where is Scotland?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“A ness is a promontory or cape, and Scotland has many place names with that word including the Loch Ness. We non-Scots think of Scotland as being a barren place, and I found Scotland in the barrenness of the hard calluses in the palm of her hand.”

“Where is France?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“In her forehead; France is armed and in revolt, making war against her hair. She has a receding hairline and will soon be bald.”

“Where is England?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“I looked for the chalky white cliffs of Dover in her mouth, but I could find no whiteness in her teeth, so I guess that rainy England is located in her chin, because of all the perspiration that rains down her face from France.”

“Where is Spain?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“I did not see hot Spain, but I felt it in the hot breath coming from her nostrils.”

“Where are America and the Indies?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Where are those fabulously wealthy areas of land? I saw them in her nose, which was decorated with rubies, valuable bright red carbuncles, and sapphires, which are also known as pimples, bright red lumpy boils, and pustules. Spain does a flourishing trade with America and the Indies, sending ships to take on cargo, and perspiration drips down Nell’s nose and gets in her Spanish nostrils.”

“Where are the Low Countries, including Belgium and the Netherlands?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Oh, sir, I did not look so low and so I did not see her nether regions.

“To conclude, this drudge, or witch, laid claim to me, called me Dromio, swore I was engaged to marry her, and told me what private marks I had on my body, including the birthmark on my shoulder, the mole on my neck, and the big wart on my left arm. Shocked and amazed by such knowledge, I ran from her as if she were a witch. I believe that if my breast had not been made of faith — I am protected by the metaphorical breastplate of righteousness and by my heart of steel — she would have transformed me into a dog with a docked tail and made me tread a wheel that would turn a spit in the kitchen.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “Go and hurry down to the port. If the wind blows in any direction away from shore, we will not stay in this town tonight. If any ship is going to set sail, come to the marketplace. I will wait there until you return to me. Everyone knows us here in Ephesus, although we know no one. That isn’t right. This must be a town full of witches and magicians, and it is time, I think, for us to leave, to go, and to depart.”

“As from a bear a man would run for his life,” Dromio said, “so will I fly from her who would be my wife.”

He exited.

Antipholus of Syracuse said to himself, “No one but warlocks and witches live here, and therefore it is high time that I not be here. A woman here calls me her husband, but I abhor her as a wife. She has a beautiful sister, who has such gentle graciousness and such enchanting

presence and such marvelous conversation. But if everyone here is a witch, then she is a witch, too, although she seems to be a goddess. She has almost made me a traitor to myself, assuming that she is trying to tempt me to my doom, like a mermaid who is a Siren who sings beautifully so that sailors jump from their safe ships and swim to her dangerous shore. To prevent myself from succumbing to her temptation, I will figuratively, like Ulysses did literally, put wax in my ears so that I cannot hear her Siren song.”

Angelo, carrying a necklace, walked up to Antipholus of Syracuse and said, “Master Antipholus —”

“Yes, that’s my name.”

“I know it is, sir. Look, here is the necklace. I hoped to have taken it to you at the Porcupine, but I needed to stay in my goldsmith shop and finish it.”

“What do you want me to do with this?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked.

“Whatever you want, sir. I made it for you.”

“Made it for me, sir!” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “I did not order it to be made.”

“Yes, you did — not once, nor twice, but twenty times. Go home with it and make your wife happy. Soon, at suppertime, I’ll visit you and you can pay me for the necklace.”

Angelo thought, *I delayed coming to the Porcupine with the necklace on purpose. My respected and respectable friend should give the necklace to his wife and not to a courtesan. Also, the necklace should help resolve whatever quarrel my friend and his wife are having.*

“Please, sir, take the money now, for fear you will never again see the necklace or the money,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

“Funny! You are a merry man, sir. I will see you later.”

Angelo exited.

Antipholus of Syracuse said to himself, “What I should think of this, I cannot tell. But I think that no man is so silly that he would refuse so beautiful a necklace when it is offered to him. I see that a man need not be a con man to live here — not when people in the streets simply hand over to him such golden gifts. I will go to the marketplace and wait for Dromio. If any ship is leaving this town, then we will board it.”

## CHAPTER 4

### — 4.1 —

In a public place stood three people: the goldsmith Angelo, a merchant to whom he owed money, and a police officer who was dressed in the tough leather uniform that the police officers of Ephesus customarily wore for protection.

The merchant said to Angelo, “You know that the money you owe me was due at Pentecost, which is always fifty days after Easter, counting Easter as one of the days. I have not much bothered you by asking for the money you owe to me, and I would not do so now, but I must travel to Persia, and therefore I need money for my voyage. Therefore, pay me immediately, or I will be forced to have this police officer arrest you for bad debt.”

Angelo courteously replied, “Nearly the same amount of money that I owe you is owed to me by Antipholus. Just before I met you, I gave him a necklace that he is going to pay me for at five o’clock. If you would, please walk with me to his house. He will pay me the money he owes me, and I will pay you the money I owe you with my thanks.”

Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus now arrived on the scene, having just left the courtesan.

The police officer saw them and said, “You need not walk to his house. Antipholus has saved you that labor — he is walking toward us now.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Dromio of Ephesus, “While I go to the goldsmith’s house, you go and buy a piece of rope. I will use it to brandish as I shout at my wife and her confederates for locking me out of my own house today. That is the gift I will bestow on her and them. I see the goldsmith. Go, Dromio. Buy a piece of rope and take it to me at my house.”

*I am buying a thousand pounds a year. I am buying a piece of rope, Dromio thought. I am being sarcastic, of course. Even if I bought a piece of rope every day for a year, the weight would not add up to a thousand pounds. I know that my master would not really hurt his wife, so the piece of rope I will buy will be a piece of thin twine that would not hurt even if it were used as a whip instead of as a stage prop. That will save my master money. I, of course, could well receive a thousand poundings from my master — three beatings a day for a year! Ouch! Ouch! A smart schoolboy who is sent out to find a branch to be whipped with knows to bring back a twig.*

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Angelo, “A man would be well helped if you said that you would help him — ha! I told the courtesan that you would show up for dinner with the necklace, but neither you nor the necklace showed up. Perhaps you thought that you and I would be too friendly if we were chained together, and so you did not come to me with the golden links of the necklace.”

“All joking aside, Antipholus, here is the bill for the necklace,” Angelo said. “It lists how much your necklace weighs to the exact carat, and it describes the fineness of the necklace’s gold and its intricate workmanship. The total cost amounts to three ducats more than I owe to this gentleman. Please, pay him immediately because he is about to go on a voyage and stays here only to receive the money.”

“I don’t have the money on me,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “Besides, I have some business to take care of in town. Good Signior, take the stranger to my house and take the necklace with you and tell my wife to pay you the sum you have written on the bill. I will try to take care of my business quickly and may be able to return soon enough to see you at my house.”

Angelo asked, “Then you will bring the necklace to your wife yourself?”

“No. Take the necklace with you in case I do not quickly arrive.”

“Well, sir, I will. Do you have the necklace?”

“If I don’t have the necklace, then, sir, I hope you have it. If you don’t, you will not get any money from me.”

“Please, sir, give me the necklace,” Angelo said. “Both wind and tide are waiting for this gentleman, and I am to blame for having held him here so long.”

“Good Lord! You are using this tarrying to excuse the breach of your promise to meet me at the Porcupine! I should have criticized you for not bringing the necklace to me there, but like a shrewish man, you were the first to begin to brawl.”

The merchant said to Angelo, “The time is passing. Please, sir, pay me.”

Angelo said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “You hear how he importunes me for his money. Please give me the necklace!”

“Why, give the necklace to my wife and she will give you your money.”

“Come, come, you know I gave the necklace to you just a few minutes ago. Either give me the necklace to give to your wife or give me a note that tells your wife to give me the money.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Angelo, “You are running this joke into the ground. Where is the necklace? Let me see it, please.”

The merchant said to Angelo, “My business is urgent and cannot wait for this delay.”

The merchant then said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “Good sir, say whether you’ll pay me or not. If you will not, I will have the police officer arrest Angelo.”

“I pay you! Why should I pay you!”

Angelo said, “You should pay him the money you owe me for the necklace.”

“I don’t owe you anything until you deliver the necklace to me.”

“You know that I gave you the necklace half an hour ago.”

“You did not give me a necklace. You wrong me much when you say that you did.”

“You wrong me more, sir, when you say that you did not receive the necklace. Think how this is going to affect my business reputation!”

The merchant said to the police officer, “Well, officer, arrest Angelo the goldsmith for failing to pay his debt.”

“I do arrest you, Angelo, and I order you in the Duke’s name to obey me.”

“This is going to hurt my business reputation,” Angelo said to Antipholus of Ephesus. “Either consent to pay this sum for me, or I will have this police officer arrest you for failing to pay your debt.”

“You want me to pay for a gold necklace that I never received! Have me arrested, foolish fellow, if you dare.”

Angelo said, “Officer, here is the money for your fee to arrest someone for failure to pay his debt. Arrest Antipholus. I would have my own brother arrested if he should treat me so badly and so openly.”

“I arrest you, sir,” the police officer said. “You have heard the charge made against you.”

“I will obey you until I post bail,” Antipholus of Ephesus said to the police officer.

He then said to Angelo, “Rascal, you shall pay for this with all the metal in your goldsmith’s shop.”

“Sir, sir, you will find that the law in Ephesus is on my side. I do not doubt that you will suffer notorious shame.”

Dromio of Syracuse returned from the harbor and said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “Master, a ship from Epidamnus is staying at Ephesus only until her owner comes aboard, and then, sir, she sails away. I have carried aboard the ship our baggage, and I have bought the oil, the balm, and the liquor you wanted. The ship is rigged and ready to sail, the merry wind blows in the right direction, and the crew is waiting for their owner, captain, and yourself to board ship so they can set sail.”

“What! Are you a madman? Why, you silly sheep, what ship of Epidamnus is waiting for me?”

“The ship you sent me to, to hire passage on it.”

“You drunken slave, I sent you to buy a piece of rope, and I told you why I wanted the rope.”

“It is just as likely that you sent me to buy a noose so that you can hang yourself,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “I repeat, sir, that you sent me to the harbor to find a ship to sail on.”

“I will talk to you later about this, and I will teach your ears to listen to me more carefully,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “Go to Adriana, you rascal — hurry and go straight to her. Give her this key, and tell her that in the desk that is covered with Turkish tapestry is a bag filled with ducats. Let her send it to me. Tell her that I have been arrested in the street and I need the money to bail myself out of jail. Go, slave, and hurry!”

He said to the police officer, “Let’s go, officer. Take me to prison until I get the bail money.”

The merchant, Angelo, the police officer, and Antipholus of Ephesus all exited.

Dromio of Syracuse said to himself, “I must go to Adriana’s house, which is where we earlier dined, and where Nell, aka Dowsabel, claimed that I was engaged to be her husband. Dowsabel is my name for her when I am being sarcastic. It is derived from the French *douce et belle* and the Italian *dulcibella*, meaning ‘sweet and pretty’ or ‘sweetheart.’”

Also, the word “dowdy” is derived from the Middle English word *doude*, meaning an *immoral, unattractive, or shabbily dressed woman*.

Dromio of Syracuse concluded, “There I must go, although against my will, for servants must their masters’ orders fulfill.”

— 4.2 —

In a room in the house of Antipholus of Ephesus, Adriana and Luciana were talking.

“Luciana, did he really try to make you fall in love with him? Could you tell by his eyes whether or not he was serious? Yes or no? How did he look? Red or pale? Serious or merry? What conclusion did you make from watching the changing expressions of his face?”

“First he said that you have no right of him. He said that you and he were not married.”

“He meant that he does not live up to his duties as a husband. That is true, and that increases my vexation.”

“Then he swore that he was a stranger here.”

“That is both truly sworn and falsely sworn. He acts strangely, and yet he is no stranger.”

“Then I pleaded on behalf of you.”

“And how did he respond?” Adriana asked.

“I begged that he love you, and he begged that I love him.”

“With what persuasion did he tempt you to love him?” Adriana asked.

“He used words that might have been persuasive if his had been a honorable courtship. He first praised my beauty and then he praised my speech.”

“Did you praise him?” Adriana asked quickly and urgently.

“Be patient, please.”

“I cannot and I will not be patient and still. My tongue, although not my heart, shall have what it wants, and my tongue wants to criticize him. He is deformed, crooked, old and sere, ugly, bad bodied, and unshapely everywhere; he is vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, and unkind; he is badly deformed in body and worse deformed in mind.”

“Who could be jealous then of such a man? No one mourns for an evil when it is gone.”

“Yes, but what I think about him is better than what I say about him, and furthermore I wish that other women did not look at him so favorably,” Adriana said. “What I say about him and what I think about him are two different things. A lapwing bird builds nests on the ground, and when a predator approaches the nest, the lapwing often pretends to be hurt and hops away on one leg and cries loudly to distract the predator and move it away from the nest. My heart prays for my husband, although my tongue curses him.”

Dromio of Syracuse ran up to Adriana and breathlessly exclaimed, “Here! Go! The desk! The bag! Sweetie-pie! Now! Make haste!”

Adriana thought, *It must be important. He is so excited that he called me “Sweetie-pie.” That is quite a liberty for a slave to take.*

Luciana asked, “Why are you out of breath?”

“I have been running fast.”

“Where is your master, Dromio?” Adriana asked. “Is my husband well?”

“No, he is not well. He is in Tartarus and Limbo, worse than Hell. A Devil in an everlasting garment has him. The Devil is one whose heart is as hard as steel. The Devil is a fiend and a goblin, pitiless and rough. The Devil is a wolf — nay, worse, he is a fellow dressed in a tough and protective leather uniform. The Devil is a ‘friend’ who creeps up on you from behind. The Devil is a ‘friend’ who claps you on the shoulder. He is one who knows the passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands so that he can track sinners. The Devil is a hunting hound that sometimes goes in the opposite direction that its prey is following, and yet he is a hound that can track sinners well. Sometimes, it is good to know where sinners have been as well as to know where they are going. The Devil who has your husband is one that before Judgment Day carries poor souls to Hell.”

“Why, man, what is the matter?”

“I do not know what the specific matter is. My master just told me to come here and get him money for bail.”

“What, has he been arrested? Tell me at whose suit he has been arrested.”

“It is true that your husband has been arrested by a police officer — a Devil — and is now in prison. I don’t know at whose lawsuit he has been arrested, but I can tell you that a policeman who was wearing a protective leather jacket — part of the official uniform of police officers here in Ephesus — arrested him. Will you send your husband, mistress, the money that is in his desk so that he can redeem himself by bailing himself out of jail?”

“Go and fetch it, sister,” Adriana said to Luciana, who took the key from Dromio and left to get the money.

Adriana said, “My husband is a businessman and must have been arrested for bad debt, but I wonder how he could be in debt without my knowing about it. Tell me. Was he arrested because of a legal bond?”

Even in an emergency, Dromio of Syracuse willfully misunderstood words. “Was he arrested because of a linen band of cloth? No. He was arrested because of something much stronger. Something that has links like a chain. He was arrested because of a necklace. Listen! Can you hear it ring?”

“Hear the links of the necklace ring? Don’t you mean jangle?”

“No, I just heard the bell of a clock. It is time that I was gone. It was two o’clock before I left my master, and the clock just struck one.”

“Is time running backward? I have never heard of that happening before.”

“Oh, yes, it does happen to hours. When an owe-er — someone who looks at all his debt and says ‘ow’ and so is an ow-er — who cannot pay his debts sees a police officer ahead of him, he runs back the way he came. And of course it is illegal to be a woman who is paid to cry ‘Oh! Oh! Oh!’ Therefore, when an oh-er or a ‘ho-er sees a police officer in front of her, she runs back the way she came. Both are afraid of being arrested.”

“Time running back the way it came! As if Time were in debt! How foolishly you think!”

“Time is a bankrupt, and he owes more than he’s worth. We never have enough Time to accomplish what we want to accomplish in any season. Indeed, Time is a thief, too. Haven’t you heard men say that Time comes stealing on by night and day? If Time is a bankrupt and a thief, and a police sergeant appears in Time’s way, doesn’t Time have a reason to turn back like an owe-er or an ow-er or an oh-er or a ’ho-er every day?”

Luciana returned with the money for bail.

“Go, Dromio,” Adriana said. “There’s the money; carry it straight to my husband and bring him home immediately.”

She said to Luciana, “Come, sister. What I am imagining is too much for me. What I am imagining causes me both pleasure and pain. I imagine the comfort that my husband will get when he is bailed out of jail, but I also remember the way that my husband has been treating me.”

— 4.3 —

Antipholus of Syracuse, who was wearing the necklace that Angelo the goldsmith had given to him, stood on a public street and said to himself, “Every man I meet here in Ephesus greets me as if I were his very good friend. Every man calls me by my name. Some give money to me; some invite me to dinner; some give thanks to me for kindnesses; some offer to sell me commodities. Just now a tailor called me into his shop and showed me silks that he said he had bought for me and then he took my measurements. Surely these are tricks of my imagination, and surely sorcerers who were educated in Lapland, that country of magic, live here.”

Dromio of Syracuse walked up to Antipholus of Syracuse and said, “Master, here’s the gold you sent me for. What, have you gotten redemption from the picture of old Adam in his new apparel?”

Dromio of Syracuse thought, *Odd. My master seems not only to have bailed himself out of jail without the money to do it with, but he also has acquired a new gold necklace. Has the police officer suddenly turned super-friendly?*

“What gold is this? And what Adam do you mean?”

“I don’t mean that Adam who kept the Garden of Eden, but I do mean that Adam who keeps the prison.

“The Adam I mean wears leather — the skin of the calf that the father ordered to be killed for the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son’s father was happy to see his son and had the fatted calf killed to provide a feast to celebrate his son’s return, but the Adam I mean wears a police officer’s leather uniform and arrests prodigals who cannot pay their debts. Of course, the first Adam’s first clothing was made of fig leaves, but both Adams later wore animal skins for clothing. Remember Genesis 3:21: ‘Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.’

“The Adam I mean is the one who came from behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and made you forsake your liberty.

“The Adam I mean is the opposite of the good angel who released Paul from prison in Acts 12:5-7: ‘So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God. On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter’s side and woke him up, saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And his chains fell off his hands.’”

“I have no idea what you are talking about.”

“You don’t? Why, I am speaking plainly about a plain case. I am talking about the man who walks around looking like the musical instrument called a bass that is still in its leather case. This man, sir, who is dressed in a leather uniform, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a reason to sob and arrests them and lets them rest in prison. He, sir, takes pity on bankrupt men who cannot afford new clothing and gives them new suits — suits of law, aka lawsuits. I am talking about a man who while making an arrest does more damage with his nightstick than a soldier does with his bayonet.”

“Are you talking about a police officer?”

“Yes, sir, I am talking about the sergeant of the band, the man who brings a man to court to answer for breaking his bond. This sergeant apparently thinks that men are always going to bed, and therefore often says, ‘God give you good rest!’ But actually he is always thinking about good arrests that will stand up in courts.”

“That is a good place for you to rest and stop your joking. Are any ships leaving Ephesus tonight? Can we set sail tonight?”

“Why, sir, I brought you word an hour ago that the ship *Expedition* is setting sail tonight. Unfortunately, you were then arrested by the police officer and so were forced to wait for the ship *Delay*. By the way, here are the angels — the gold coins — that you sent me to get so that you could pay your bail.”

“You are confused in your mind, and so am I. Here in Ephesus, we wander around in illusions of our mind. May some blessed power deliver us from here!”

The courtesan walked over to them and said, “Well met, Master Antipholus. I see, sir, from the necklace that you are wearing that you have seen the goldsmith who failed to show up for dinner and bring the necklace to you — that is why you left before we enjoyed our after-dinner dessert. I assume that this is the necklace that you promised to give me.”

Antipholus of Syracuse had never seen the courtesan before and so he thought that she was a figure of evil: one of the many witches reputed to live in Ephesus. He said, “Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not,” using some of the words of Jesus as they appeared in the 1599 Geneva Bible: “Then said Jesus unto him, ‘Avoid[,] Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve’” (Matthew 4:10).

“Avoid, Satan” was another way of saying, “Get away from me, Satan” or “Depart, Satan” or “Get lost, Satan.”

Dromio of Syracuse asked, “Master, is this person Mistress Satan?”

“She is the Devil.”

“No, she is worse,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “She is the Devil’s dam, aka the Devil’s mother. She has appeared here in front of us dressed like a woman with loose — or nonexistent — morals. In other words, she looks like a cheap date. Sometimes, women say, ‘God damn me!’ That is the same thing as saying, ‘God, make me a cheap date’ or ‘God, make me a dam, aka mother.’ It is written that Devils sometimes appear to men like angels of light: ‘And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light’ (2 Corinthians 11:14). Light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn; ergo, cheap dates will burn — they will give men a venereal disease that will make the men burn when they pee. Do not go near her, master. On second thought, she looks like she might be a very expensive ‘date.’”

“Your slave and you are very funny, sir,” the courtesan said. “Will you go with me? Shall we enjoy our after-dinner dessert here in my house?”

“Master, if you do go and eat with her, expect to use a spoon to eat soft food, such as children and old people use to eat with, for you would have to be simple-minded to eat with such a woman as this. If you do go and eat with her, make sure that you use a spoon with a long handle.”

“Why, Dromio?”

“Whoever wants to eat with the Devil must have a long spoon.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said to the courtesan, “Avoid, fiend! Get lost! Why are you talking to me about after-dinner dessert? You are, like everyone else here in Ephesus, either a sorceress or magician. I conjure you to leave me and be gone.”

“We made a trade at dinner: I gave you a diamond ring and you promised to give me a gold necklace. Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner, or, in exchange for my ring, give me the necklace you promised to give to me, and I’ll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.”

As the courtesan had said, Antipholus of Ephesus and she had made a trade at dinner: She had given him her diamond ring worth forty ducats, and in return he had promised to give her a gold necklace worth two hundred ducats. If the courtesan was unable to get the necklace, she wanted to at least get her ring back.

Dromio of Syracuse said, “Some Devils ask for only the parings of one’s fingernails, a straw, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin, a nut, a cherry pit, or other items that can be used in making potions or casting spells, but this female Devil, who is greedier, wants to have a necklace. Master, be wise: Do not give her the necklace. For if you give it to her, the Devil will shake the links of the necklace like the links of a chain and frighten us with it. Remember Revelation 20:1-2: ‘And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.’”

“Please, sir,” the courtesan said. “Give me my ring back, or else give me the necklace. I hope that you do not intend to cheat me.”

“Avaunt, you witch!” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “Get away from me, you witch!”

“Avaunt” means “go away” or “get lost.”

Then he added, “Come, Dromio, let us go.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “A courtesan accusing us of cheating is like a peacock with its ornate feathers accusing someone of being proud. Mistress, you know all about that. Pride is one of the seven deadly sins, and it is personified by a whore — the citizens of Babylon were proud, and the whore of Babylon had something written on her forehead: ‘And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH’” (Revelation 17:4).

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse exited, leaving behind the courtesan, who said to herself, “It must be that Antipholus is insane, or he would never behave in this way. He has a ring of mine that is worth forty ducats, and for that ring he promised me a necklace. Now he refuses to give me either the ring or the necklace. The reason why I think that he is insane, besides the way he was acting just now, is the wacky story he told me today at dinner: He said that his own door was shut and locked so that he could not enter his home. Apparently, his wife, knowing about his fits of insanity, purposely locked the door to keep him from entering the house. Now I need to go to his home and tell his wife a lie. I will say that her husband, who is a lunatic, rushed into my house and took away my ring from me by force. This course of action is the best that I can choose because forty ducats is too much for me to lose.”

— 4.4 —

On a street of Ephesus stood Antipholus of Ephesus and the police officer.

“Don’t be afraid, officer,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “I will not try to run away. I’ll give you, before I leave you, as much money as is needed to bail me out of jail. My wife is in a wayward mood today, and she will not easily believe a messenger who gives her the news that I have been arrested in Ephesus. That unwelcome news will, I tell you, sound harshly in her ears.”

Dromio of Ephesus arrived, carrying the piece of rope that he had been sent to buy.

Antipholus of Ephesus said to the police officer, “Here comes my man; I think he brings the money needed to bail me out of jail.”

He called, “Now, sir! Have you gotten what I sent you for?”

“Here’s something that, I warrant you, will pay them all back for the way they treated you,” Dromio of Ephesus said, holding the piece of rope: a thin, limp piece of twine.

“But where’s the money?”

“Why, sir, I paid the money for the rope.”

“You paid five hundred ducats, rascal, for a rope?”

“I will give you five hundred ropes in return for five hundred ducats.”

“To what end or purpose did I order you to hurry home?”

“To get a piece of rope, sir — the rope’s end, and having accomplished that purpose I have returned.”

“I intended to use that piece of rope as a stage prop to hold as I threaten my wife,” Antipholus of Ephesus said, looking at the thin, limp piece of twine that Dromio of Ephesus had brought

to him.

He added, “And to my purpose for that end of rope, sir, I welcome you,” and he started hitting Dromio of Ephesus with the thin, limp piece of twine.

“Good sir, calm down,” the police officer said to Antipholus of Ephesus.

“Why don’t you tell me to be patient?” Dromio of Ephesus said. “I am the one who is suffering adversity! Remember what the Prayer Book version of Psalm 94:13 says: ‘That thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity.’”

“Be good, now,” the police officer said. “Hold your tongue.”

“It would be better if you told him to hold his hands still,” Dromio of Ephesus, who was still being hit with the twine, said.

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “You son of a whore! You senseless rascal!”

“I wish I were without senses, sir — especially the sense of touch. That way, I would not feel your blows.”

Of course, the blows from the twine did not hurt. Dromio of Ephesus simply liked to complain.

“You are sensible in — that is, you understand — nothing but blows, and so you are like an ass.”

“I am an ass, indeed,” Dromio of Ephesus said. “You may prove it by looking at my long ears.”

He said to the police officer, “Indeed, I have served my master for many long years — from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and I have had nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me by beating me. When I am warm, he cools me by beating me. I am awakened from sleep by being beaten. When I sit, I am ordered to stand up by being beaten. When I need to leave our home, I am driven from it by being beaten. When I return home, I am welcomed by being beaten. I bear my beatings on my shoulders the way that a beggar woman bears her brat. Someday, one of his beatings will make me lame, and then I will be a beggar who limps from door to door.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Come, let’s go and meet my wife, who I see is walking toward us with some other people.”

Adriana, Luciana, and the courtesan walked toward Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Ephesus, and the police officer. With them was a man called Pinch because of his pinched face. He had the reputation of being a learned conjuror, although he did not use Latin in his exorcisms.

Dromio of Ephesus said to Adriana, “Mistress, *respice finem*, which is Latin for ‘respect your end.’ Or, better, *respice funem*, which is Latin for ‘respect your rope.’ Beware of having your end come at the end of a rope; for many people, at the end of the rope is a noose. You have heard parrots that have been taught to say ‘rope.’ By the way, have you noticed that your husband has the end of a rope?”

“Are you still blabbing!” Antipholus of Ephesus said, using his hat to hit Dromio of Ephesus.

“What do you think now?” the courtesan asked Adriana. “Don’t you think that your husband is mad?”

Adriana replied, “His incivility and terrible behavior confirm no less.”

She then said, “Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer. Get my husband back in his right senses, and I will give you whatever you will demand.”

Luciana said, “It’s sad. How fiery and sharp and angry he looks!”

“Look how he trembles in his frenzy!” the courtesan said. “He has been possessed by a malevolent spirit.”

Pinch said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.”

Antipholus of Ephesus replied, “Here is my hand, and let it feel your ear.”

He hit Pinch on the ear.

Pinch attempted an exorcism: “I order you, Satan, who is housed within this man, to leave this man’s body as ordered by my holy prayers and to hurry home to the pit of darkness. I exorcise you with the help of all the saints in Heaven!”

“Shut up, you doting and doddering wizard, shut up! I am not mad,” Antipholus of Ephesus said.

“I wish that you weren’t, you poor distressed soul!” Adriana said.

Antipholus of Ephesus said to her, “You loose woman, you hussy, are these your customers? Did this companion with the yellow pinched face revel and feast at my house today while you shut and locked the door to prevent me from entering my own house?”

“Husband, God knows that you ate dinner at home. I wish that you had stayed at home until now — you would have avoided all this trouble and gossip and shame and embarrassment!”

“You say that I dined at home!” Antipholus of Ephesus said to his wife.

He asked Dromio of Ephesus, “Rascal, what do you say about that?”

“Sir, you did not dine at home, and that is the truth.”

“Isn’t it true that my door was shut and locked so that I could not enter my own house?” Antipholus of Ephesus asked.

“It is true that your doors were locked and you were shut out of your own house.”

“Is it true that my wife insulted me after locking me out of my house?” Antipholus of Ephesus asked.

“Yes, your wife insulted you after locking you out of your house.”

“Didn’t her kitchen-maid rail at, taunt, and scorn me?” Antipholus of Ephesus asked.

“Yes, she did; the kitchen-vestal who keeps the fire going scorned you.”

“Didn’t I depart from there in a rage?” Antipholus of Ephesus asked.

“Truly, you did depart in a rage. My bones bear witness that you departed in a rage because they have felt the depth of your rage.”

Adriana asked Pinch, “Is it a good idea to pretend to agree with my mad husband when he says such crazy things?”

“There is no shame in it,” Pinch replied. “This slave has figured out that agreeing with his master is a good way to keep him from being violent.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Adriana, “You convinced the goldsmith to have me arrested.”

She replied, “I gave Dromio money to take to you so that you could bail yourself out of jail when he came here and urgently asked for it.”

“Gave me money!” Dromio of Ephesus said. “She might have given me heart and goodwill and her best wishes, but as for money, she gave me not even a farthing, master.”

Antipholus of Ephesus asked him, “Didn’t you go to her and ask her to give you a bag full of gold ducats so you could bring it to me?”

Adriana said, “He came to me and asked me for it, and I gave it to him.”

Luciana added, “And I witnessed her doing it.”

“May God and the rope maker bear witness that I was sent to get nothing but a piece of rope!” Dromio of Ephesus said.

“Mistress, both the slave and his master are possessed by malevolent spirits — I can tell by their pale and deadly looks,” Pinch said. “They must be bound and laid in some dark room.”

Antipholus of Ephesus asked his wife, “Adriana, why did you lock me out of my own home?”

He asked Dromio of Ephesus, “And why didn’t you give me the bag full of gold ducats?”

Adriana replied, “I did not, gentle husband, lock you out of your own home.”

Dromio of Ephesus replied, “And, gentle master, I received no gold. But I acknowledge, sir, that we were locked out of the house.”

Adriana said to Dromio of Ephesus, “You lying rascal. You lied twice just now.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to his wife, “Adriana, you lying harlot, you have lied in everything you said. You have plotted with a damned pack of scoundrels to mock me and make me a laughingstock. But with my fingernails I will pluck out your false eyes that want to see me mocked and shamed!”

Adriana screamed, and three or four men came and tried to tie up Antipholus of Ephesus, who fought them.

Adriana said, “Tie him up! Tie him up! Don’t let him come near me!”

Pinch shouted, “We need more help! The fiend possessing him is powerful!”

“The poor man!” Luciana said. “How pale and wan he looks!”

Finally tied up, Antipholus of Ephesus shouted, "What, are you trying to murder me? Police officer, I am your prisoner. Are you going to allow them to take me from you?"

The police officer said, "Let him go. He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him."

Pinch pointed to Dromio of Ephesus and said, "Tie up this man because he is also possessed by a malevolent spirit."

Men tied up Dromio of Ephesus.

Adriana asked, "What are you doing, you silly police officer? Do you take pleasure in seeing a wretched man do outrage and harm to himself?"

"He is my prisoner," the police officer said. "If I let him go, I will be required to pay the debt he owes."

Adriana replied, "I will pay the debt before I leave you. Take me to my husband's creditor. Once I know what the debt is and I am satisfied that it is genuine, I will pay it."

She said to Pinch, "Good master doctor, see my husband safely conveyed home to my house. This is a very unhappy day!"

"You are a very unhappy strumpet!" Antipholus of Ephesus said to his wife.

"Master, I have been tied up and bound to you because of you," Dromio of Ephesus said.

Antipholus of Ephesus replied, "Rascal, why are you enraging me!"

"Why should you be bound for nothing?" Dromio of Ephesus asked. "Since they think that you are insane, you should act as if you are insane. Shout, 'The Devil!' Let them think that you are talking to the Devil that is supposed to be possessing you."

"May God help these poor souls," Luciana said. "How crazily they talk!"

"Take my husband and his slave to our home," Adriana said.

She then said, "Sister, come with me. We will go with this police officer."

Everyone left except for Adriana, Luciana, the police officer, and the courtesan.

Adriana asked the police officer, "Who charged my husband with not paying his debt and got him arrested?"

"Angelo, a goldsmith. Do you know him?"

"I know the man. What is the sum my husband owes?"

"Two hundred ducats."

"For what is it owed?"

"Your husband ordered and received a gold necklace."

"My husband ordered a gold necklace to be made for me, but as far as I know, he never received it."

The courtesan said, "I told you earlier that your husband in a fit of insanity came to my house today and carried away my ring — I saw him wearing my ring just now. Just after he carried away my ring, I saw him on the street wearing a gold necklace."

"That may be true, but I have never seen the necklace," Adriana said. "Come, police officer, take me to the goldsmith. I want to learn the truth about what is going on."

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse entered the scene. Because Antipholus of Syracuse was afraid of the witches and warlocks with whom Ephesus seemed to be infested, he had drawn his sword and made Dromio of Syracuse draw his dagger.

Seeing them, Luciana cried, "May God have mercy! Your husband and his slave have gotten loose!"

Adriana said, "And they are brandishing weapons. Let's call for more help to have them tied up again."

The police officer cried, "Let's run away — or they'll kill us!"

Everyone ran away, leaving Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse behind by themselves.

Antipholus of Syracuse said, "I see that these witches are afraid of swords."

"The woman who called herself your wife ran away," Dromio of Syracuse said.

"Let's go to the Centaur Inn and fetch our baggage from there. I wish that we were safe and sound on board a ship quickly sailing away from Ephesus."

"Let's stay here tonight," Dromio of Syracuse said. "The inhabitants will surely not do us harm. You have seen that they are afraid of weapons and that they speak kindly to us and that they have given gold to us. I think that Ephesus is a town filled with good people, and except for the mountain of mad flesh who claims to be engaged to marry me, I could find it in my heart to stay here always and become a warlock."

"I would not stay here tonight even if doing so would get me all the possessions of the entire town. Therefore, let's go and get our baggage and carry it on board ship."

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

Angelo the goldsmith and the merchant to whom he owed money stood on a street in front of an abbey, aka nunnery.

“I am sorry, sir, that I have hindered you from starting your travels,” Angelo said, “but I swear that Antipholus received the necklace from me, although he very dishonestly denies it.”

“What is his reputation here in Ephesus?”

“He is very well regarded, sir. He receives infinite credit from businesspeople, he is highly beloved, and he is second to none who live here in the town. On the basis of his word alone, I would lend him my entire net worth.”

He thought, *Or I would have until today — he must not be in his right mind now.*

“Speak softly. I think that is him walking over there.”

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse walked toward them. Antipholus of Syracuse was still wearing the gold necklace around his neck.

“That is him,” Angelo said, “and he is wearing around his neck the gold necklace we were talking about although he swore to the police officer that he had not received it. Good merchant, sir, draw nearer to me so that you can support me. I’ll speak to him.”

Angelo then said, “Signior Antipholus, I wonder much that you would put me to this shame and trouble, and not without some scandal to yourself. You swore to the police officer that you had not received the gold necklace, but now I see that you are openly wearing it around your neck. In addition to being legally charged with not paying your debt, as well as suffering shame and imprisonment, you have done wrong to this man, who is my honest friend. He would have hoisted sail and put to sea today except that he had to stay here because of the controversy revolving around the necklace. Can you now deny having received that necklace from me?”

“I did receive this necklace from you. I know that I have never denied receiving this necklace from you.”

The merchant, who had been a witness, said, “Yes, you did deny receiving the necklace from Angelo, sir, and you swore to the police officer that you did not receive the necklace from Angelo.”

“Oh, really? And who has ever heard me deny receiving the necklace or swear that I never received it?”

“These ears of mine heard it,” the merchant said. “You know that they heard it. Shame on you, wretch! It is a pity that you are allowed to walk on the streets alongside honest men.”

“You are a villain to accuse and slander me in this way. I’ll prove that I am an honorable and honest man to you right now, if you dare to draw your sword and stand against me.”

“I do dare to draw my sword, and I do call you a villain.”

Both Antipholus of Syracuse and the merchant drew their swords. Angelo the goldsmith did not.

Adriana, Luciana, the courtesan, and a few other people arrived on the scene.

“Stop!” Adriana said. “Don’t hurt my husband, for God’s sake! He is insane. Some of you get inside his guard and take his sword away. Tie up Dromio, too, and take them to my house.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “Run, master, run. For God’s sake, find a place we can take refuge in. Look, here is an abbey. Let us find sanctuary here, or we are ruined!”

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse ran inside the abbey.

The Abbess, who was named Emilia, walked out of the abbey and said, “Be quiet, people. Why are you thronging around the abbey gate?”

“We want to fetch my poor mentally disturbed husband from here,” Adriana said. “Let us come in so that we may tie him up securely and take him home so he can recover from his madness.”

“I knew that he could not be in his right mind,” Angelo said to the merchant.

“I am sorry now that I drew my sword against him,” the merchant replied.

“How long has madness possessed him?” the Abbess asked.

“This week he has been heavy in spirits, sour, melancholy, and much different from the man he used to be,” Adriana said, “but not until this afternoon did his sickness make him violently angry.”

“What is the reason for his madness? Has he lost a lot of wealth because of a shipwreck? Has he buried a dear friend? Has he fallen in love with another woman? That is a sin that is very common in youthful men who allow their eyes to wander. Which of these sorrowful things have happened to him?” the Abbess asked.

“None of these, except the last one,” Adriana said, glancing at the courtesan. “He has some other woman who draws him away from home.”

The Abbess thought, *I will attempt to find out the cause of this man’s madness by questioning his wife. I will see how she has been treating — or mistreating — him. Because she suspects that he has been unfaithful to her, she may have been shrewish and too badly mistreated him. We must find a mean between extremes. Not enough of something is bad. Too much of something is bad. Exactly the right amount is good.*

“If he leaves home to see another woman, you should criticize him for that,” the Abbess said.

“Why, so I have,” Adriana said.

“Yes, but not roughly enough,” the Abbess said.

“As roughly as my modesty would let me,” Adriana said.

“Perhaps you criticized him only in private,” the Abbess said.

“In private, yes, but in public, too,” Adriana said.

“Yes, but you did not criticize him strongly enough,” the Abbess said.

“It was the only topic of our conversation,” Adriana said. “In bed I did not allow him to sleep because I kept talking about it. At meals I did not allow him to eat because I kept talking about it. When we were alone together, it was the only topic I talked about. When we were in the company of other people, I often mentioned it. Always, and over and over, I told him that what he had done was vile and bad.”

“And because of your shrewishness, this man went mad,” the Abbess said. “The venomous clamors of a jealous woman are a poison more deadly than the poison that comes from the bite of a mad dog. Based on what you just told me, it seems your railing at him hindered his sleep, and therefore his head is now disoriented. You said that you seasoned his food with your upbraidings: Clamorous meals have as a consequence poor digestion, from which comes the raging fire of fever. What is a fever but a fit of madness? You said that his entertainments were marred by your brawls.

“Unless one engages occasionally in sweet recreations, one suffers moody and dull melancholy, which is related to grim and comfortless despair, and at the heels of despair follow a huge infectious troop of pale illnesses and foes to life. You have disturbed his life-preserving rest, his meals, and his sweet entertainments. When that happens to any man or beast, the result is madness.

“Based on what you have told me, I have concluded that your jealous fits have driven from your husband his ability to use his wits.”

Luciana defended her sister: “Adriana never reprehended him except mildly and gently, while he behaved in a rough, rude, and wild manner.”

She asked her sister, “Why do you bear these rebukes? Why don’t you defend yourself?”

“The Abbess is right,” Adriana replied. “She said the things necessary for me to see that I was wrong.”

She then said, “Good people, enter the abbey and lay hold of my husband and carry him out.”

“No, I will not allow any person to enter the abbey,” the Abbess said.

“Then let your servants bring my husband out.”

“No. He entered my house in order to get sanctuary, and he will get it. As long as he is in the abbey, he is beyond the reach of the law. He shall be protected from being taken away by your hands until I have brought him to his wits again, or tried to bring him back to his wits but failed.”

Adriana said, “I will look after my husband and be his nurse and feed him healthy food. This is my duty as his wife, and I will have no one else but me do it. He is my husband in sickness and in health; therefore, let me take my husband home with me.”

“Be patient and stay calm,” the Abbess said. “I will not allow him to leave here until after I have used the tried and tested means I have of restoring him to health: wholesome syrups, medicinal drugs, and holy prayers. This will make him a formal — a well-formed, aka normal — man again. It is a part and parcel of my oath — it is a charitable duty of my religious order. Therefore, depart and leave him here with me.”

“I will not go away and leave my husband here,” Adriana said. “It ill suits your holiness to separate a husband and a wife.”

“Be quiet and depart. You shall not take him away from here.”

The Abbess went inside the abbey.

Luciana advised her sister, “Complain to the Duke of Ephesus about this indignity.”

“Yes, I will fall prostrate at his feet and never rise until my tears and prayers have persuaded his Grace to come in person here and take away by force my husband from the Abbess.”

The merchant said, “By this time, I think, the shadow cast by the sundial points at five — it is five o’clock. Soon, I am sure, the Duke himself in person will come this way to the melancholy vale — the place of death and sorrow-causing execution — behind the drainage ditches of the abbey here. Such is the news that I have heard today.”

Angelo asked, “Why is the Duke going there today?”

“To see an old merchant from Syracuse, who unluckily put into this bay against the laws and statutes of this town. He will be beheaded publicly for his offence.”

“Look, the Duke and the old merchant are coming,” Angelo said. “We will witness the old merchant’s death.”

Luciana said to Adriana, “Kneel to the Duke before he passes the abbey.”

Duke Solinus, accompanied by his attendants, and Egeon, the old merchant from Syracuse, now arrived. The Headsman — the executioner — and other officers also arrived. Egeon was bareheaded in readiness for his beheading.

Duke Solinus said, “Yet once again proclaim it publicly that if any friend will pay the ransom for this respectable old merchant, then the old merchant shall not die. We value and respect him that much.”

Adriana knelt and said loudly, “Give me justice, most sacred Duke, against the Abbess!”

Duke Solinus said, “The Abbess is a virtuous and a reverend lady: It cannot be that she has done wrong to you.”

Adriana replied, “May it please your Grace, I am concerned about Antipholus, my husband, whom I made Lord of me and all I had, with your approval as shown by your letters in support of him.

“This ill day, a most outrageous fit of madness took him with the result that desperately he hurried through the street. His slave, who was as insane as my husband, went with him. They annoyed the citizens of Ephesus by rushing into their houses and taking away rings, jewels, and anything that my husband in his madness wanted. I was able for a time to have my husband tied up and sent home, while I attempted to make amends for the wrongs he had committed here and there in his madness.

“Very quickly, and I do not know how he did it, he escaped from the men who were guarding him, and he and his insane slave, each extremely angry, with drawn swords, met us again and madly attacked us, and chased us away until, after raising more help, we came again to tie

them up. Then they fled into this abbey, where we pursued them. And here the Abbess shuts the gate against us and will not allow us to fetch my husband out, nor will she send him out so that we may take him away from here.

“Therefore, most gracious Duke, command that my husband be brought out of the abbey and taken to his home so that he may receive help for his madness.”

Duke Solinus said, “Long ago your husband served me in my wars, and when you married him and made him master of your bed, I promised — giving my word as Prince — to do him all the grace and good I could.”

The Duke then ordered, “Go, some of you, knock at the abbey’s gate and order the Abbess to come to me. I will settle this matter before I leave here.”

One of Adriana’s servants arrived and said to her, “Oh, mistress, mistress, run away and save yourself! My master, Antipholus, and his man, Dromio, have both broken loose. They have beaten the maids one after the other and tied up Doctor Pinch. They have singed his beard off with brands of fire, and as it burned, they threw on him great pails of muddy water from puddles to quench his burning hair. My master, Antipholus, mocks Doctor Pinch by telling him to stay calm and carry on, and all the while his man Dromio uses scissors to give Doctor Pinch the haircut of a fool. Surely, unless you immediately send some help, between them they will kill Pinch the conjurer.”

“Be quiet, fool! Your master and his man are here in the abbey, and everything that you have said is false.”

“Mistress, I swear upon my life that I am telling you the truth. I have almost not had time to breath since I witnessed it. Your husband cries for you, and he vows that when he finds you he will smear charcoal all over your face and so disfigure you.”

Some cries sounded.

The servant continued, “Listen! I hear him, mistress. Run away! Go now!”

Duke Solinus said, “Come, stand by me, Adriana and Luciana; fear nothing. Guards, be ready to use your weapons!”

“It is my husband!” Adriana said. “All of you are witnesses that my husband can do impossible things. He travels about invisibly. Just now we had him trapped in the abbey here, but now he is over there. Human reason cannot explain how that happened. The abbey has high walls around it and only one gate: the one in front of us.”

Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus ran over to the group of people.

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Give me justice, most gracious Duke. Give me justice! Remember the service that long ago I did for you when I stood over you in the wars and suffered deep scars in order to save your life. In return for the blood that I shed then to save your life, grant me justice now.”

Egeon thought, *Unless the fear of death is making me imagine things, I see Antipholus, my son, and Dromio, his slave.*

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "Give me justice, sweet Prince, against that woman there! She is the woman whom you gave to me to be my wife. She has abused and dishonored me in the most egregious ways possible! Beyond imagination is the wrong that she this day has shamelessly done to me."

"Tell me what has happened, and you will find that I am just and fair," Duke Solinus said.

"On this day, great Duke, she shut and locked the door of my house so that I could not get in, while she with people of low character feasted in my house."

"That would be a grievous fault!" Duke Solinus said.

He asked Adriana, "Tell me, woman, did you do what your husband says you did?"

"No, my good Lord. Three of us — I myself, my husband, and my sister — today dined together. I swear on my soul that what my husband said is not true!"

Luciana said, "May I never stay awake during the day, nor sleep at night, if what my sister is telling your Highness is not the simple truth!"

Angelo the goldsmith thought, *That is perjury! Both women lied! In this instance, the madman is telling the truth and justly making charges against them!*

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "My Liege, I am in my right mind and I know what I am saying. I am neither drunk and disturbed with the effect of wine, nor am I heady-rash and provoked with raging ire, although the wrongs that I have endured might make someone wiser than I insane.

"This woman locked me out of my house today and kept me from eating dinner there. That goldsmith there, if he were not in league with her, could bear witness to what I say, for he was with me then. He departed from me to go and fetch a necklace, promising to bring it to the Porcupine, where Balthazar and I dined together. Our dinner done, and the goldsmith not coming to the Porcupine, I went to seek him.

"In the street I met him, and in his company was that gentleman, a visiting merchant. Also with them was a police officer. At that time this goldsmith perjured himself by swearing that I this day received the necklace from him — the necklace that, God knows, I have never seen. The goldsmith then had the police officer arrest me. I obeyed the orders of the police officer, and I sent my slave home to get a bag of ducats so I could post bail. My slave returned with no ducats. Then I politely spoke to the officer and asked him to go in person with me to my house.

"On our way there, we met my wife, her sister, and a rabble consisting of her vile confederates. Along with them they brought a man named Pinch, who is a hungry, lean-faced villain; a mere skeleton; a mountebank; a threadbare magician and a fortune-teller; a needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch; a dead-looking man. This pernicious slave pretended to be a conjurer, and he gazed into my eyes and felt my pulse. He was so scrawny that he seemed to have no face, but he disconcerted me by staring steadily at me. He cried out that I was possessed.

"Then all together they fell upon me, tied me up, carried me away from there, and left me and my slave, both of us bound together, in a dark and dank room with an arched ceiling at home. Eventually I was able to use my teeth to gnaw in two the ropes binding us. I gained my freedom, and I immediately ran here to see your Grace, whom I beseech to give me ample satisfaction for these deep shames and great indignities."

Angelo said, "I can in part vouch for the madman's story. I know for a fact that he did not dine at home, and I know for a fact that he was locked out of his house."

Duke Solinus asked, "Did he receive a necklace from you, or not?"

"He did, my Lord. People here saw that he was wearing the necklace when he ran into the abbey just now."

The merchant said to Antipholus of Ephesus, "In addition, I will swear that these ears of mine heard you confess that you had received the necklace from Angelo although you had earlier sworn in the marketplace that you had not received it. When I said that you had earlier sworn that you had not received the necklace, we quarreled and drew our swords, and then you fled into this abbey here, from whence, I think, you have come by a miracle."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "I have never been inside the walls of this abbey, and you have never drawn a sword against me. In addition, I have never seen the necklace, so help me, Heaven! Most of the things you are saying about me are false."

"Why, what an intricate case this is!" Duke Solinus said. "I think you all have drunk a potion from the cup of the pagan goddess Circe and been enchanted. If all of you had really driven Antipholus into this abbey, he would still be there. If he were really mad, he would not be able to speak so rationally. Adriana says that he dined at home; Angelo the goldsmith denies that."

Duke Solinus turned to Dromio of Ephesus and asked, "What have you got to say about this?"

Dromio of Ephesus pointed to the courtesan and replied, "Sir, Antipholus dined with this woman at the Porcupine."

The courtesan said, "He did, and from my finger snatched that ring he is wearing."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "It is true that I received this ring from her."

Duke Solinus asked the courtesan, "Did you see him enter the abbey here?"

"Yes, as surely and as clearly, my Liege, as I see your Grace."

"Why, this is strange," Duke Solinus said.

He turned and ordered one of his men, "Go tell the Abbess to come out here."

The man left to go and get the Abbess.

Duke Solinus then said, "I think that all of you are either confused or stark mad."

Egeon, who had been quiet, now said, "Most mighty Duke, give me permission to speak a few words. Perhaps I see a friend here who will save my life and pay the sum that may deliver me from execution."

"Speak freely, man of Syracuse. Say whatever you wish."

Egeon asked, "Isn't your name, sir, Antipholus? And isn't that man your bondman, aka slave, Dromio?"

Dromio of Ephesus replied, "Within this hour I was his bondman, sir — he and I were bonded, aka bound, together. But he, and I thank him for it, gnawed in two the bonds that bound me."

Now am I Dromio and his man, aka slave, unbound.”

Egeon said, “I am sure that both of you remember me.”

“By looking at you, we remember in what situation we were recently, sir. For lately we were bound and tied up, as you are now. Are you one of Pinch’s patients, sir?”

“Why do you look at me as if you do not know me?” Egeon asked. “You know me well.”

Antipholus of Ephesus replied, “I have never seen you in my entire life until now.”

Egeon said, “Grief has changed me since you saw me last, and hours filled with cares have used time’s deforming hand to write wrinkles on my face. But please tell me, don’t you recognize my voice?”

“No,” Antipholus of Ephesus said.

Egeon asked, “How about you, Dromio?”

“No. Trust me, sir, I do not.”

“I am sure that both of you do,” Egeon said.

Dromio of Ephesus said, “I am sure I do not, and whatever a man denies, you who are bound are bound to believe him.”

“Not know my voice!” Egeon said. “Time, you who are so very severe, have you so cracked and split my poor tongue in seven short years, that now my only son does not know my feeble key of untuned cares? My voice is like unmelodious music, and my song describes my sorrows. Although this lined face of mine is now hidden by winter’s drizzled snow that stops tree sap from circulating — that is, my white beard — and although all my veins have frozen my blood and made it cold, yet my night of life, aka old age, has some memory left, my wasting lamps that are my eyes have some fading glimmer left, and my dull and deaf ears are still able to hear a little. All these old witnesses tell me that you are my son Antipholus. I cannot be wrong about that.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “I have never seen my father in my life.”

Upset, Egeon said, “You know that it has been only seven years since we parted in Syracuse, boy.”

He hesitated and then said, “But perhaps, my son, you are ashamed to acknowledge that I am your father because I am a prisoner.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “You come from Syracuse, and the Duke and all who know me in this town can bear witness that I have never seen Syracuse in all my life.”

Duke Solinus said, “I can tell you, merchant of Syracuse, that for twenty years I have been the patron of Antipholus, during which time he has never seen Syracuse. I see that your old age and the danger you are in are making you talk foolishly.”

Emilia now walked up to Duke Solinus, bringing with her Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse.

She said, “Most mighty Duke, behold a man who has been much wronged.”

The two Antipholuses stood side by side, and the two Dromios stood side by side.

Everyone stared at them.

Adriana said, "I see two husbands, or my eyes deceive me."

Duke Solinus looked at the two Antipholuses and said, "One of these men must be the genius — the attendant spirit that follows him throughout his life and looks exactly like him — of the other."

He looked at the two Dromios and said, "The same is true of these two other men."

He then asked of both sets of men, "Who is the natural man, and who is the attending spirit? Who can tell the difference?"

Dromio of Syracuse said, "I, sir, am Dromio; command the spirit who looks exactly like me to go away."

Dromio of Ephesus said, "I, sir, am Dromio; please, let me stay."

Antipholus of Syracuse said to his father, "Are you Egeon? Or are you his ghost?"

Dromio of Syracuse looked at Egeon and said, "It is my old master! Who has tied him up?"

Emilia said, "No matter who bound this man, I will loosen this man's bonds and gain a husband by his liberty. Speak, old Egeon, if you are the man who once had a wife named Emilia who bore to you in one birth two beautiful sons. If you are that same Egeon, speak, and speak to the same Emilia, who is me!"

"Unless I am dreaming, you really are Emilia," Egeon said. "If you are she, tell me what happened to that son who floated away with you on the fatal raft?"

"He and I and the twin Dromio were all rescued by men of Epidamnus, but by and by violent fishermen of Corinth used force to take Dromio and my son away from me. They took my son away and left me with the men of Epidamnus. What then happened to my son and his slave, I cannot tell. I eventually arrived at this fortune that you see me in."

Duke Solinus thought, *Why, here we see that the story that the old merchant of Syracuse told me this morning is true. Look at these two Antipholuses; these two are entirely alike. And look at these two Dromios; they are the same in appearance. The merchant of Syracuse told me about the wreck at sea, and I now know that Egeon and Emilia are the parents to these children, who by accident have finally met.*

He asked one of the Antipholuses, "Antipholus, did you come originally from Corinth?"

Antipholus of Syracuse replied, "No, sir, not I; I came from Syracuse."

Duke Solinus said to the two Antipholuses, "Stand a little distance apart from each other; I do not know which of you is which."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "I came originally from Corinth, my most gracious Lord —"

Dromio of Ephesus said, "And I came with him."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "We were brought to this town by that most famous warrior, Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle."

Adriana asked, "Which of you two dined with me today?"

Antipholus of Syracuse replied, "I did, gentle mistress."

"Are you my husband?"

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "He is not. I can most emphatically say that."

Antipholus of Syracuse said, "I can confirm that I am not married to Adriana, although she said that I was her husband. And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here, called me brother."

He said to Luciana, "What I told you then, when we were alone after dinner, I hope I shall have leisure to make good, if this is not a dream that I see and hear."

Angelo said, "That is the necklace, sir, which you received from me."

Antipholus of Syracuse said, "It is, sir. I do not deny it."

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Angelo, "And you, sir, had me arrested because of this necklace."

Angelo replied, "I think I did, sir. I do not deny it."

Antipholus of Syracuse handed the necklace to Antipholus of Ephesus, who hung it around the neck of his wife, Adriana.

Adriana said to her husband, "I sent money to you, sir, to be your bail. Dromio was supposed to give you the money, but I think he did not bring it."

Dromio of Ephesus said, "No money was sent by me."

Antipholus of Syracuse said, "I received the bag of ducats you sent, Adriana, and Dromio of Syracuse, my slave, brought them to me. I see that my brother and I met each other's slave, and I see that I was mistaken for my brother, and he for me, and thereupon these errors arose."

Antipholus of Syracuse gave the bag of gold ducats to his brother, Antipholus of Ephesus.

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "With these ducats I pay the ransom for my father here."

"You need not do that," Duke Solinus said. "I hereby pardon your father without ransom and allow him to live."

The courtesan said to Antipholus of Ephesus, who was wearing her ring, "Sir, I must have that diamond ring that you are wearing; it is mine."

Antipholus of Ephesus took off the ring and gave it to the courtesan, saying, "Here, take it; and thank you very much for entertaining me."

Emilia said, "Renowned Duke, please go with us into the abbey here and hear all of us tell our stories. If anyone here has suffered any wrong from the mishaps of this day, come and keep us company, and we shall make everything right. For thirty-three years, it has been as if I have labored to give birth to you, my twin sons, and until this hour right now I did not give birth. Now I am able to see and enjoy my two sons. The Duke, my husband, and my twin children,

and you two Dromios, who are the calendars of my twins' nativity, having been born in the same hour and on the same day as them, go into the abbey and enjoy the feast that celebrates a birth or baptism. After enduring grief for so long, it is time to enjoy festivity!"

Duke Solinus said, "With all my heart, I'll celebrate and enjoy this feast."

Emilia cut the bonds of Egeon, and hand in hand they walked into the abbey.

Everyone exited except for the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios and Adriana and Luciana.

Dromio of Syracuse said, "Master, shall I fetch your baggage from the ship?"

Antipholus of Ephesus asked, "Dromio, what baggage of mine have you put on board a ship?"

"All of your belongings that were at the Centaur Inn, sir."

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Antipholus of Ephesus, "He thought he was talking to me."

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Dromio of Syracuse, "I am your master, Dromio. Come and go with us. We'll take care of the baggage later. Embrace your brother there; rejoice with him."

The two Antipholuses went inside the abbey. Antipholus of Ephesus went in while holding hands with Adriana, his wife. Antipholus of Syracuse went in while holding hands with Luciana, Adriana's sister.

Dromio of Syracuse said to his brother, "A fat friend at your master's house thought that I was you and entertained me in the kitchen during dinner today. She now shall be my sister, not my wife."

"I think that you are my mirror, and not my brother," Dromio of Ephesus replied. "I see by you that I am a sweet-faced youth. Will you go into the abbey with me and see the celebration?"

"I will not go in ahead of you, sir. You are the older brother, so you should go in first."

"Am I the older brother? We don't know for sure. How shall we decide who is older?"

"Let's draw straws. Until then, you will enjoy the rights of the older brother."

Dromio of Ephesus said, "No. Instead, let's do this. We came into the world brother and brother, so now let's go into the abbey hand in hand, and not one before the other."

Dromio of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus held hands and walked into the abbey together.

**CHAPTER IV: *Love's Labor's Lost***

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**MALE CHARACTERS**

FERDINAND, King of Navarre. King Ferdinand falls in love with the Princess of France.

BIRON, Lord, attending on the King. Biron falls in love with Rosaline.

LONGAVILLE, Lord, attending on the King. Longaville falls in love with Maria.

DUMAIN, Lord, attending on the King. Dumain falls in love with Katherine.

BOYET, MARCADÉ, Lords, attending on the Princess of France.

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, a fantastical Spaniard.

SIR NATHANIEL, a Curate.

HOLOFERNES, a Schoolmaster.

DULL, a Constable.

COSTARD, a Clown.

MOTE, Page to Armado.

A Forester.

**FEMALE CHARACTERS**

The PRINCESS of France.

ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHERINE, Ladies, attending on the Princess. Rosaline is a black woman.

JAQUENETTA, a country Wench.

**MINOR CHARACTERS**

Officers and Others, Attendants on the King and the Princess.

**SCENE:** Navarre.

**NOTES:**

For the translations of the Latin quotations in Act 4, scene 2, I used the Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Love's Labor's Lost*:

Shakespeare, William. *Love's Labor's Lost*. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. New York. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1996. Print.

In this society, the word “wench” was not necessarily negative. It was often used affectionately.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

In his park — an expanse of land stocked with game birds and animals — Ferdinand, the King of Navarre, was talking with his attendants Biron, Longaville, and Dumain. Navarre was a small country in between France and Spain. Attendants can be nobles, as is the case with Biron, Longaville, and Dumain. As he talked, King Ferdinand held a document.

King Ferdinand said, “Let fame, which all men hunt after in their lives, live inscribed upon the bronze plates of our tombs and then grace — honor — us in the disgrace of death, when, in spite of cormorant-devouring Time, the endeavor of this present breath and life may buy that honor which shall dull the keen edge of Death’s scythe and make us heirs of all eternity.”

Death can be disgraceful because it results in the rotting of our bodies, but one way that we can disgrace death is by achieving fame and having our reputation continue to live after our bodies die.

The time that we have to live is short because Time is like the greedy bird named the cormorant. The cormorant gulps its prey, and Time gulps the minutes and hours and more of our lives.

King Ferdinand continued, “Therefore, brave conquerors — for so you are, you who war against your own affections and passions and the huge army of the world’s desires. Our recent edict shall strongly stand in force: Navarre shall be the wonder of the world because our court shall be a little Academy, calm and contemplative in the art of proper living.

“You three, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, have sworn to live with me as my fellow-scholars for a term of three years, and to keep those statutes that are recorded in this document here. Your oaths are spoken, and now you must sign your names, so that the evidence of his own handwriting may strike down the honor of the man who violates the smallest clause written here in this document.

“If you are armed — properly prepared — to do as you have sworn to do, sign your name to your deep and solemn oaths, and keep your oaths, too.”

Longaville said, “I am resolved to keep my oath. It is only a fast lasting three years. The mind shall banquet, though the body pine and starve. Fat paunches have lean pates — heads and what is in them — and dainty bits make the ribs fat, but quite bankrupt the wits.”

Longaville signed the document.

Dumain said, “My loving lord, I — Dumain — am mortified: I am dead to Earthly pleasures. The grosser and cruder kind of these delights of the world I — Dumain — throw upon the gross world’s baser slaves. Let lesser people enjoy such lesser pleasures.

“When it comes to love, wealth, and pomp, I pine and die — I reject them all. Instead of enjoying such pleasures, with all these others who sign the oath I will live a philosophic life.”

Dumain signed the document.

Biron said, "I can only repeat what Longaville and Dumain have already said. So much, dear liege, I have already sworn. That is, I have already sworn to live and study here three years.

"But there are other strict observances such as not to see a woman in that term of three years, which I very much hope is not written there. And other strict observances such as one day in a week to touch no food and to eat only one meal on each of the other six days, which I hope is not written there. And then such other strict observances as to sleep only three hours in the night, and not be seen to shut one's eyes during all the day, which I fervently hope is not written there — I have been accustomed to think no harm all night and to make a dark night also of half the day."

Biron was thinking of this proverb: He who drinks well sleeps well, and he who sleeps well thinks no harm. He was accustomed to sleeping all night and napping much of the day.

Biron continued, "Oh, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep — to not see ladies, to study, to fast, and to not sleep!"

King Ferdinand said, "Your oath is passed to pass away from these. You swore an oath to renounce all of these."

"Let me say no, my liege, if you please," Biron replied. "I swore only to study with your grace and to stay here in your court for the space of three years."

Longaville said, "You swore to that, Biron, and to all the rest."

"By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest," Biron said.

Matthew 5:37 of the King James Bible states, "*But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*"

Matthew 5:37 says to swear either yes or no, but Biron was saying that he had sworn both yes and no — yes to part of the oath, and no to the rest of the oath. When he had sworn to the oath, he was agreeing to keep part of the oath, but the rest of his swearing was only in jest.

Biron then asked, "What is the end — the purpose — of study? Let me know."

King Ferdinand replied, "Why, to know that which otherwise we would not know."

"So you mean things hidden and barred from common sense?" Biron asked.

"Yes, that is study's godlike recompense," King Ferdinand said.

"Come on, then; I will swear to study so that I will know the thing I am forbidden to know," Biron said. "For example, I will study where I may dine well, when to feast I expressly am forbidden. Or I will study where to meet some fine mistress, when mistresses from common sense are hidden. Or, having sworn to a too-hard-to-keep oath, I will study how to break it and yet not break my word — my troth."

A "mistress" can be a woman who is respected and loved. A "mistress" is not necessarily a sexual partner.

Biron continued, "If study's gain be thus and this be so, study knows that which yet it does not know. Ask me to swear an oath to learn this, and I will never say no. This is the kind of hidden and secret knowledge that I would like to know."

King Ferdinand said, “These things you talk about are the stops — the obstructions — that hinder study quite and tempt our intellects to indulge in vain delight.”

Biron said, “Why, all delights are vain, but the delight is most vain that with pain purchased does acquire pain — the most vain delight is one that is acquired with difficulty and also brings difficulty with it.”

Pursuing such a delight is done in vain. An archaic meaning of the word “vain” is “foolish,” and so pursuing such a delight is foolish. Why pursue something that will bring you pain when that pain is not worth the price to acquire it?

Biron continued, “For example, painfully to pore upon a book to seek the light of truth, while truth the while does treacherously blind the eyesight of its look — its sight. Light seeking light does light of light beguile and cheat. So, before you find where light in darkness lies — before you discover the clarification of obscure and esoteric knowledge — your light grows dark by the loss of your eyesight.”

Biron was referring to the belief that engaging in excessive reading could make one blind.

Biron continued, “Let me study how to please the eye indeed by fixing it upon a fairer eye — the eye of a woman. Such a fairer eye will dazzle the beholder, and although it will blind him, it yet shall be his guiding light and give him the light that blinded him.

“Study is like the Heaven’s glorious Sun that will not be deeply searched with saucy and insolent looks. The Sun will not permit you at stare at it.

“Little have continual plodders ever won except base authority from others’ books.

“The original astronomers named the planets. These Earthly godfathers of Heaven’s lights — the astronomers — who give a name to every planet get no more profit from their shining, starlit nights than those who walk and don’t know what the names of the planets are.”

Astronomers are learned people who give names to planets the way that godfathers give names to infants, but how much practical and personal profit can a person get out of naming — or knowing the names of — the planets? We can learn about constellations and such things by reading books, but is that knowledge practical?

Biron continued, “To know too much is to know nothing but fame, and every godfather can give a name.”

“Fame” is “what is said about something.” The excessive studying of books results in a lack of knowledge through personal experience: One knows little more than what one has read. True, an acquisition of knowledge by the excessive studying of books can get one a name — but a name is something that any godfather can bestow.

Biron was equivocating. Becoming a great scholar can get one a name — a reputation — but that is a different kind of name from the name that a godfather can bestow.

King Ferdinand said, “How well Biron has read! He is able to reason against reading!”

Dumain said, “He has proceeded — argued — well in his attempt to stop all good proceeding — all good advancement of knowledge!”

One meaning of “to proceed” is “to get a university degree.” Dumain was saying in part that Biron was proceeding to make arguments in order to keep others from proceeding — from getting a university degree.

Longaville said, “He weeds the wheat and still lets grow the weeding.”

He meant that Biron was pulling up the wheat and allowing the weeds to grow. Biron was praising the wrong thing and dispraising the right thing.

Biron replied, “The spring is near when green geese are a-breeding.”

Green geese are young geese that cackle. Here Biron was saying that Dumain and Longaville were cackling — making critical comments about him — as if they were green geese — young fools.

Dumain asked, “How does what you said follow from what we said?”

“It is fit, aka suitable, in its place and time,” Biron replied.

“In reason what you said is nothing,” Dumain said. “It makes no sense.”

Biron made a reference to “no rhyme or reason” by saying, “It is something then in rhyme.” If something is with no rhyme or reason, it has no reasonable explanation or purpose.

Maybe Dumain did not understand the reason why Biron had said what he said, but he could understand that “weeding” and “a-breeding” rhymed.

King Ferdinand said, “Biron is like a malicious sneaping and nipping frost that bites the first-born infants — the buds — of the spring.”

“Well, let’s say I am,” Biron said. “Why should proud summer boast before the birds have any cause to sing? Why should I take joy in any abortive — stopping before it starts — birth? At Christmas I no more desire a rose than I wish for a snow during May’s new-fangled mirth. Instead, I like each thing that in season grows.”

Earlier, Biron had argued against excessive studying. Now, he was arguing against doing things out of season. Things ought to be done at the right time for doing them. Each natural season has its own delights; each time of a man’s life has its own delights. Yes, there is a time for intensive study, but Biron and the others were past that time — they were too old to be pupils. Now was the time for them to pursue ladies.

Biron added, “So I say to you that to study now is too late. It would be like climbing over the house to unlock the little gate.”

“To climb over the house to unlock the little gate” is “to do something absurd.”

King Ferdinand said, “Well, you should sit this oath out. Go home, Biron. Adieu.”

“No, my good lord,” Biron said. “I have sworn to stay with you, and although you can say I have spoken more in favor of barbarism and uncivilized ignorance than for that angel knowledge you have spoken in favor of, yet, confident, I’ll keep what I have sworn and endure the penance of each day of each of the three years.

“Give me the paper; let me read the same, and to the strictest decrees I’ll sign my name.”

King Ferdinand handed the document to Biron and said, "How well this yielding rescues you from shame!"

Biron read out loud, "*Item: That no woman shall come within a mile of my court.*"

He asked, "Has this item been publicly proclaimed?"

Longaville replied, "Yes, four days ago."

Biron said, "Let me read the penalty."

He read out loud, "*On pain of losing her tongue.*"

He asked, "Who devised this penalty?"

"Indeed, that did I," Longaville said.

"Sweet lord, why?" Biron asked.

"To frighten them away from here with that dread penalty," Longaville replied.

"It is a dangerous law against gentility, good manners, and civilized behavior!" Biron said.

He read out loud, "*Item: If any man be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years, he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.*"

Biron said to King Ferdinand, "This article, my liege, you yourself must break, for you know well that the French King's daughter, who is a maiden of grace and complete majesty, is coming here as an ambassador to speak with yourself about surrendering the territory of Aquitaine to her decrepit, sick, and bedridden father. Therefore, this article was made in vain, or else the admired Princess comes vainly hither."

"What do you say, lords?" King Ferdinand said. "Why, this was quite forgotten."

"Excessive study evermore — always — overshoots and misses the target," Biron said. "While excessive study does study to have what it would, it forgets to do the thing that it should, and when it has the thing it hunts for most, it is won as towns are with fire — so won, so lost."

In times of warfare, an enemy town can be set on fire so that it can be won. Setting the town on fire can win — conquer — the town, but often the town is also lost — destroyed — because of the fire.

A person committed to study may learn and so get what he would — what he wants — but that person may lose what he should be getting; for example, he may lose out on getting a wife.

King Ferdinand said, "We must because of necessity dispense with and set aside this decree. The French Princess must necessarily reside here in the palace."

Biron said, "Necessity will make us all break our oaths three thousand times within this three years' space. Every man is born with his own passions, and these passions are not mastered by his efforts and might — mastering these passions requires the special grace of God.

"If I break my oath, this phrase shall speak for me; I am forsworn on 'complete necessity.' And so to the items of the oath at large I write my name."

He signed his name on the document.

Biron added, “And he who breaks any of these items in the least degree stands in attainder of — condemned to — eternal shame. Temptations are to other men as to me. But I believe, although I seem so loath to sign my name, I am the last who will last keep his oath.”

Biron’s words were ambiguous. He may have meant that he was the last man to sign his name to the oath and he was the last man who would keep the oath — in other words, he would not keep his oath. Or he may have meant that he was the last man to sign his name to the oath and he was the man who would longest keep the oath.

He then asked, “But is there no quick and lively recreation allowed to us?”

“Yes, there is,” King Ferdinand replied. “Our court, you know, is frequently visited by a refined traveller from Spain. He is a man rooted in all the world’s new fashions, and he has a mint of phrases in his brain. He is one whom the music of his own vain tongue ravishes like enchanting harmony. He is a man of compliments, courteous manners, and nice distinctions, whom right and wrong have chosen to act as umpire of their state of discord. This child of fancy, this fantastic creature, who is Armado hight [named], during the intermissions of our studies shall relate in high-born words the worth of many a knight from tawny, sun-burnt Spain lost in the world’s debate — he will tell us about many knights who died in the world’s wars. Such stories are told in Spanish chivalric romances.

“What you delight in, my lords, I don’t know, not I. But, I protest, I love to hear him lie, and I will use him for my entertainment.”

Biron said, “Armado is a most illustrious wight, a man of fire-new, fresh-from-the-mint words, and he is fashion’s own knight.”

Armado used affected language, and so King Ferdinand and Biron were using affected words as they talked about him. “Hight” means “named,” and “wight” means “man.”

“Costard the swain and Armado shall be our entertainment,” Longaville said. “And so let’s begin to study; three years is only a short time.”

A “swain” is a “rural fellow” or a “yokel.” The word “costard” meant both “a large apple” and “a head.”

Anthony Dull and Costard walked over to King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain. Dull, a constable, was carrying a letter.

Dull asked, “Which is the Duke’s own person?”

By “Duke,” he meant King Ferdinand. In this society, “Duke” meant “Ruler,” and so it was synonymous with “King.”

“This man, fellow,” Biron replied. “What do you want?”

“I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his grace’s tharborough,” Dull said, “but I would see his own person in flesh and blood.”

Dull made malapropisms. Instead of the word “reprehend,” he meant “represent.” The word “reprehend” means “reprimand.” By “tharborough,” Dull meant “farborough,” a kind of constable.

“This is he,” Biron said, indicating King Ferdinand.

“Signior Arme ... Arme ... commends you,” Dull said. He could not pronounce “Armado.” He also should have said, “commends himself to you,” not “commends you.”

Constable Dull handed King Ferdinand the letter and added, “There’s villainy abroad. This letter will tell you more.”

“Sir, the contempts thereof the letter are as touching — concerning — me,” Costard said.

Costard meant “contents,” not “contempts,” although “contempts” was a fitting word for the contents of the letter.

Reading the letter, King Ferdinand said, “This is a letter from the magnificent Armado.”

“However low is the matter — the content — of the letter, I hope in God for high words,” Biron said.

He was hoping that the letter used highfalutin language even if the content of the letter was trivial. Such a letter would be funny. Biron was well aware of Armado’s penchant for fancy words.

“That is a high hope for a low Heaven — a high hope for a small blessing,” Longaville said. “That’s not much to hope highly for. May God grant us patience!”

“Patience to hear?” Biron asked. “Or patience to refrain from laughing?”

“To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately,” Longaville said. “Or to refrain from both.”

“Well, sir, it may be that the style shall give us cause to climb in the merriness,” Biron said.

He was punning on “style” and “stile” — a stile consisted of steps that allowed people to climb over a wall or a fence.

Costard said, “The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it — the state of the case — is, I was taken with the manner — I was caught in the act.”

“In what manner?” Biron asked.

Costard replied, “In manner and form following, sir.”

This was a legal formula used to introduce a detailed description of a crime.

Costard continued, “All these three — manner, form, and following — as I will describe now.

“I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form — the bench — and taken following her into the park, which, put together, is ‘in manner and form following.’ Now, sir, as for the manner — it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman. As for the form — in some form.”

Costard had followed Jaquenetta, a rural woman, because he wanted to talk to her. The manner of a man is to want to talk to a woman. The word “manner” means “the way things are done.” As for the form, a woman has a womanly form.

Biron asked, “Is the form the reason for the following, sir?”

Costard replied, “As it shall follow in my correction — my punishment — and may God defend the right!”

The words “May God defend the right” were used in trials by combat. A high-ranking person could accuse another high-ranking person of a capital crime. If no proof were available, the two could fight to the death. The reasoning was that God would ensure that the person who was in the right would kill the person who was in the wrong. Whoever lost the combat, therefore, was guilty.

King Ferdinand asked Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, “Will you listen carefully and attentively to this letter?”

Biron answered, “We will, just as if we were listening to the words of an oracle.”

An oracle of the gods answers important questions.

Costard, who knew the contents of the letter, said, “Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.”

Some of his malapropisms were appropriate: “simplicity,” in place of “simplicity.”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*Great deputy, the welkin’s vicegerent and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul’s earth’s god, and my body’s fostering patron.*”

King Ferdinand was “the welkin’s vicegerent.” He was a ruler on Earth, and as such he was God’s deputy on Earth. This culture believed that God chose who would be King.

Costard said, “Not a word of Costard yet.”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*So it is —*”

“It may be so, but if he says it is so, he is, when it comes to telling the truth, only so-so,” Costard said.

King Ferdinand ordered, “Peace!”

Costard replied, “May peace belong to me and to every man who dares not fight!”

King Ferdinand said, “By ‘Peace,’ I mean, ‘Be quiet.’ Say no more words.”

“Say no more words of other men’s secrets, I beg you,” Costard said.

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*So it is, besieged with sable-colored melancholy, I did commend the black-oppressing humor to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when? About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which; which, I mean, I walked upon: it is yclept thy park.*”

Armado used all those words to say this: I was feeling depressed, and so, around suppertime, I took a walk in your park.

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*Then for the place where; where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and preposterous event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebony-colored ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest; but to the place where; it standeth north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy curious-knotted garden: there did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth*” —

Armado used all those words to say this: There in the park near your garden I saw something I consider obscene that caused me to write you this letter.

He compared the perpetrator of the something obscene to a minnow — a small, insignificant fish. He saw the something obscene near the curious-knotted garden — fashionable decorative gardens of the time were laid out in intricate designs.

Costard asked, “Me?”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*that unlettered small-knowing soul*” —

The word “unlettered” means “uneducated.”

Costard asked, “Me?”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*that shallow vassal*” —

Costard asked, “Still me?”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*who, as I remember, hight Costard*” —

Costard said, “Oh, it is me!”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*who, sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, which with — oh, with — but with this I passion to say wherewith*” —

Armado used the word “passion” as a verb meaning “grieve.” “Sorted and consorted” meant “associated and accompanied.”

Costard said, “He is going to write that he found me with a wench.”

The word “wench” meant “woman” and was often used affectionately.

King Ferdinand read out loud, “— *with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet grace’s officer, Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.*”

Dull said, “That is me, if it shall please you; I am Anthony Dull.”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*For Jaquenetta — so is the weaker vessel called whom I apprehended with the aforesaid swain — I keep her as a vessel of the law’s fury; and I shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring her to trial. Thine, in all compliments of devoted and heart-burning heat of duty.*”

Armado had used all those words to say this: I have arrested Jaquenetta and as soon as you, King Ferdinand, give the order, I will put her on trial.

The letter was signed, “DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.”

Biron said, “This is not so well as I looked for, but the best that ever I heard.”

King Ferdinand said, “Yes, the best for the worst — this is an excellent example of a badly written and pretentious letter.”

He then asked Costard, "But, sirrah, what do you say about this?"

"Sirrah" was a word used to address a man of much lower social rank than the speaker.

"Sir, I confess to being with the wench," Costard replied.

"Did you hear the proclamation about not being in the company of women?" King Ferdinand asked.

"I do confess much of the hearing it, but little of the marking of it," Costard said. "I heard it, but I did not pay much attention to it."

"It was proclaimed that a man would be imprisoned for a year if he were caught with a wench," King Ferdinand said.

"I was not taken with a wench, sir. I was taken with a damsel."

"Well, the proclamation also used the word 'damsel.'"

"She was no damsel, sir. She was a virgin."

"The proclamation used many different words for a woman, including the word 'virgin.'"

"If the proclamation did use the word 'virgin,' then I deny her virginity. I was taken with a maiden."

"This maiden will not serve your turn, sir," King Ferdinand replied.

He meant that using the word "maiden" would not keep Costard from being punished.

"This maiden will serve my turn, sir," Costard said.

He meant that the maiden would serve him sexually.

King Ferdinand said, "Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: You shall fast for a week with bran and water."

Costard said, "I had rather pray a month with mutton soup."

In this society, the word "mutton" was sometimes used to refer to a whore.

King Ferdinand continued, "And Don Armado shall be your jail keeper."

"My Lord Biron, see that Costard is delivered over to Don Armado."

"And now we go, lords, to put in practice that which each to the others has so strongly sworn. It is time that we begin to study."

King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain exited.

Biron said, "I'll bet my head against any goodman's hat that these oaths and laws will prove to be an idle scorn. They are useless and ought to be scorned."

A goodman is a man with a rank below that of a noble. The title "goodman" especially applies to a farmer or a yeoman, aka freeholder.

Biron then said to Costard, "Sirrah, come on."

“I suffer for the truth, sir,” Costard said. “For it is true that I was caught with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl, and therefore I welcome the sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and until then, sit thee down and keep me company, sorrow!”

Costard had mixed up his words, using “prosperity” when he meant “affliction,” and vice versa.

—1.2—

Don Adriano de Armado was talking to Mote, his young page, in King Ferdinand’s park. A page is a youthful attendant to a person of high rank.

Armado said, “Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?”

He expected that Mote would answer that it is a sign that the man of great spirit is in love, but Mote answered, “It is a great sign, sir, that he will look sad.”

Armado said, “Why, sadness is one and the self-same thing as melancholy, dear imp.”

“No, no,” Mote said. “Oh, Lord, sir, no.”

“How can thou distinguish between sadness and melancholy, my tender juvenal?”

By “juvenal,” Armado meant “juvenile.”

Mote replied, “By an easily understandable demonstration of the application, my tough signior.”

Mote was punning on “signior” and “senior.”

“Why tough signior? Why tough signior?” Armado asked.

“Why tender juvenal? Why tender juvenal?” Mote answered.

“I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent epitheton appertaining to thy young days, which we may nominate ‘tender,’” Armado said.

“Congruent epithon” is a fancy way of saying “appropriate description.”

Mote said, “And I, tough signior, as an appertinent title to your old age, which we may name ‘tough.’”

“Appertinent” is an obsolete, fancy way of saying “appertaining” or “suitable.” Mote was mocking Armado’s use of fancy words.

Armado commented, “Pretty and apt.”

“What do you mean, sir?” Mote asked. “That I am pretty, and my saying is apt? Or that I am apt, and my saying is pretty?”

“Thou art pretty, because thou art little.”

“I am little pretty, because I am little,” Mote said. “Wherefore am I apt?”

Armado replied, “And therefore you are apt, because you are quick.”

“Are you saying that to praise me, master?” Mote asked.

“Yes, I say it in thy condign praise.”

“Condign” means “well-deserved.”

Mote said, “I will praise an eel with the same praise.”

“You will praise an eel by saying that it is quick — ingenious?” Armado asked.

“I will praise an eel by saying that it is quick — swift,” Mote said.

“I do say that thou art quick in answers,” Armado said. “Thou heatest my blood.”

Hot blood is angry blood.

“I understand, sir,” Mote said.

“I love not to be crossed,” Armado said.

Mote thought, *He speaks the complete opposite of the truth; he loves crosses, but crosses do not love him.*

In this society, coins were decorated with crosses.

“I have promised to study three years with the Duke,” Armado said.

“You may do it in an hour, sir,” Mote said.

“That is impossible.”

“How many is one counted three times — one times three?”

“I am ill at reckoning,” Armado said. “I am bad at math; math is something suitable for a tapster, aka bartender — someone who lacks my great spirit.”

“You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir,” Mote said.

A gamester is a gambler.

“I confess to being both,” Armado said. “They are both the varnish — polish — of a complete man.”

“Then, I am sure, you know how much the gross sum of deuce-ace amounts to.”

A deuce-ace is a throw of the dice resulting in a one and a two.

“It doth amount to one more than two,” Armado said.

“And that is what the low-born common people call three,” Mote said.

“That is true.”

Mote said, “Why, sir, is this such a piece of study? Was that hard? Now here you have completed your study of three, even before you have blinked three times. How easy it is to join the word ‘years’ to the word ‘three,’ and then you can study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you.”

The dancing horse was a famous performing horse of the time named Morocco (or Marocco). In addition to dancing, it would use its hoof to tap out numbers on the ground, seemingly

solving simple arithmetic problems.

“That is a most fine figure!” Armado said.

The figure was a figure of speech, or word play. A figure is also a number.

Mote thought, *This figure proves that you are a cipher.*

A cipher is a zero — it is nothing.

“I will hereupon confess that I am in love,” Armado said, “and as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base — low-born — wench. If drawing my sword against the disposition of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and ransom him to any French courtier for a newly devised courtesy such as a new fashionable bow. I think it would be scornful to sigh. Methinks I should outswear Cupid. Comfort, me, boy, by telling me what great men have been in love.”

“Hercules is a great man who has been in love, master,” Mote answered.

“Most sweet Hercules!” Armado said. “Give me some more authoritative examples, dear boy. Name some more, and, my sweet child, let them be men of good reputation and carriage.”

One meaning of the word “carriage” is “bearing or demeanor.” Mote, however, used it in a different sense.

“Samson, master,” Mote replied. “He was a man of good carriage, great carriage, for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter, and he was in love.”

Judges 16:3 states this: “*And Samson slept till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gates of the city and the two posts, and lifted them away with the bars, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

“Oh, well-knit, strongly built Samson!” Armado said. “Strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love, too. Who was Samson’s love, my dear Mote?”

“A woman, master.”

“Of what complexion?”

One meaning of the word “complexion” is “disposition or temperament.”

Mote replied, “Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.”

This society believed that the mixture of four humors in the body determined one’s temperament. One humor could be predominant. The four humors are blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. If blood is predominant, then the person is sanguine (optimistic). If yellow bile is predominant, then the person is choleric (bad-tempered). If black bile is predominant, then the person is melancholic (sad). If phlegm is predominant, then the person is phlegmatic (calm).

Armado said, “Tell me precisely of what complexion.”

Instead of understanding “complexion” to mean “disposition or temperament,” Mote deliberately misinterpreted it to mean skin coloring.

“Of the sea-water green, sir,” Mote said.

Many young girls of the time suffered from “green-sickness.” Falling in love was thought to cause this illness, but we now believe that the young girls were actually anemic from iron deficiency.

“Is that one of the four complexions?” Armado asked.

“I have read that, sir; and it is the best of them, too,” Mote said.

“Green indeed is the color of lovers; but to have a love of that color, methinks Samson had small reason for it,” Armado said. “He surely affected — loved — her for her wit.”

One reason green is the color of lovers is that young women would meet their lovers and get what was called a green gown. The women would lie on their backs and get grass stains on their gowns.

“It was so, sir,” Mote said, “for she had a green wit.”

A green wit is an immature wit, aka immature intelligence.

“My love is most immaculate white and red,” Armado said.

“Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under such colors,” Mote said.

The word “immaculate” means “unstained”; “maculate thoughts” are “stained or sinful thoughts.”

“Define, define, well-educated infant,” Armado said. “Explain what you mean.”

“My father’s wit and my mother’s tongue, assist me!” Mote said, deliberately changing the phrase “mother’s wit.”

“Sweet invocation of a child,” Armado said. “That was very pretty and pathetic! That was very pretty and moving!”

Mote sang this song:

*“If she be made of white and red,*

*“Her faults will never be known,*

*“For blushing cheeks by faults are bred*

*“And fears by pale white shown:*

*“Then if she fear, or be to blame,*

*“By this you shall not know,*

*“For still her cheeks possess the same*

*“Which naturally she does own.”*

Maculate thoughts are sinful thoughts and thinking them in the company of others can cause a white-skinned person to be embarrassed by having blameworthy thoughts and to blush red, thus allowing other persons to know that the blushing person is embarrassed. And fear causes a Caucasian to grow pale, or white. But if a person has a complexion naturally composed of white blotches and red blotches, then who knows what that person is thinking?

Mote said, "This is a dangerous rhyme, master, against the cause of white and red."

Armado asked, "Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?"

In this society, ballads about "King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maiden" were common at one time. King Cophetua was an African who had no interest in women until he saw a beggar-maiden named Penelophon and fell in love with her.

Mote replied, "The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages ago, but I think now it is not to be found; or, if it were, it would be acceptable neither for the writing nor the tune."

"I will have that subject newly writ over, so that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent," Armado said.

His "digression" was a "moral lapse." He wanted to have a new version of the ballad written because it would show that another man — who was great — was guilty of the same digression or transgression as he.

He added, "Boy, I love that country girl whom I took in the park with the rational hind Costard. She deserves well."

A rational hind is a yokel who is capable of showing some intelligence.

By "took," Armado meant "arrested."

Mote thought, *She well deserves to be whipped; and yet she deserves a better lover than my master.*

In this society, law officials punished prostitutes by whipping them.

"Sing, boy," Armado said. "My spirit grows heavy in love."

"And that's a great marvel because you love a light wench," Mote said.

Light wenches were promiscuous women who had light heels that could be easily lifted in the air along with parted knees.

"I say, sing," Armado said.

"Wait until this company of people has passed by," Mote said.

Constable Dull, Costard, and Jaquenetta walked up to them.

Dull said to Armado, "Sir, the Duke's pleasure is that you keep Costard secure, and you must suffer him to take no delight nor no penance, but he must fast three days a week."

Instead of "penance," Dull meant to say "pleasance," which means "pleasure."

Dull continued, "As for this damsel, I must keep her at the park. She has been assigned the job of being a dairy-maiden. Fare you well."

“I betray myself with blushing,” Armado said.

He was thinking sinful thoughts.

He said to Jaquenetta, “Maiden!”

She replied, “Man.”

“I will visit thee at the lodge.”

“That’s nearby.”

“I know where it is situated.”

“Lord, how wise you are!”

“I will tell thee wonders,” Armado said.

“With that face?” Jaquenetta replied.

This was an idiomatic expression that meant, “Really? I don’t believe you!”

“I love thee,” Armado said.

“So I heard you say,” Jaquenetta replied.

This was another idiomatic expression that meant, “Really? I don’t believe you!”

“And so, farewell.”

“May fair weather follow you!” Jaquenetta said.

Constable Dull said, “Come, Jaquenetta, let’s go!”

Dull and Jaquenetta exited.

Armado said to Costard, “Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences before thou shalt be pardoned.”

“Well, sir, I hope, when I do it, I shall do it on a full stomach,” Costard said.

“On a full stomach” was an idiomatic expression meaning “courageously.”

Armado said, “Thou shalt be heavily punished.”

“I am more bound to you than your servants are bound to you, for they are but lightly rewarded,” Costard said.

Armado said to Mote, “Take away this villain; shut him up.”

Mote said to Costard, “Come, you transgressing slave; let’s go!”

Costard said to Armado, “Let me not be pent up, sir. I will fast, being loose.”

He meant that he would fast even if he were loose and not shut up in a cell, but his words could also be interpreted as saying that he would fast as a treatment for having loose bowels.

“No, sir,” Mote said. “That would be fast and loose.”

“Fast and loose” was the name of a rope trick that con men pulled to make money.

Mote added, “You shall go to prison.”

“Well, if ever I do see the merry days of desolation that I have seen, some shall see.”

Costard meant to say “jubilation,” not “desolation.”

Mote asked, “What shall some see?”

“Nothing, Master Mote, but what they look upon,” Costard said. “It is not for prisoners to be too silent in their words, and therefore I will say nothing. I thank God I have as little patience as another man; and therefore I can be quiet.”

As usual, Costard misused words. Instead of “silent,” he meant to say “loud.” And he had meant to say “as much patience,” not “as little patience.”

Mote and Costard exited, leaving Armado alone.

Armado said to himself, “I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread.”

By “affect,” he meant “love.” Even when talking to himself, he used and misused both fancy words and ordinary words. Or perhaps he really meant that Jaquenetta’s foot was baser — nastier — than her shoe.

He continued, “I shall be forsworn, which is a great argument — evidence — of falsehood, if I love.”

Yes, perjury — falsely swearing — is great evidence of falsehood.

He continued, “And how can that be true love which is falsely attempted? Love is a familiar, a spirit attending a witch; Love is a devil — there is no evil angel but Love.

“Yet was Samson so tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit. Cupid’s butt-shaft — blunt arrow — is too hard for Hercules’ club; and therefore too much odds for this Spaniard’s rapier.

“The first and second cause will not serve my turn.”

Armado was thinking about having a duel with Cupid, the god who shot arrows that caused people to fall in love. The first and second causes of fighting a duel were being accused of committing a capital crime such as treason, and being accused of being dishonorable. Cupid was causing Armado to commit a crime in violation of King Ferdinand’s recently announced law, and he was causing Armado to lose honor by breaking an oath that he had sworn.

He continued, “The *passado* — forward thrust of the rapier — Cupid respects not, and the *duello* — dueling code — Cupid regards not. Cupid’s disgrace is to be called ‘boy,’ but his glory is to subdue men. Adieu, valor! Rust, rapier! Be still, drum! For your manager — master — is in love; yea, he loveth. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme, for I am sure I shall turn sonneteer. Devise, wit; write, pen — I am for whole volumes in folio.”

Now that Armado was in love, he was going to follow the courtly custom of writing love sonnets to the woman he loved. He was calling upon some god to help him write enough

sonnets to fill up a large book — a folio.

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

The Princess of France had arrived in the park of King Ferdinand. With her were her lady attendants Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine, and her male attendant Boyet. Also present were lords and other attendants.

Boyet said, “Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits, your best powers. Consider whom the King your father sends, to whom he sends, and what’s his message. The King your father sends yourself, who is held precious in the world’s esteem, to parley with the sole inheritor — possessor — of all perfections that a man may own, the matchless King Ferdinand of Navarre; the issue to be discussed is of no less weight than the territory of Aquitaine, which is valuable enough to be a dowry for a Queen.

“Be now as prodigal of all dear — valuable — grace as Nature was in making graces dear — expensive — when she starved the general world other than yourself and prodigally gave them all to you.”

The Princess of France replied, “Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, although it is only average, does not need the painted flourish of your praise. Beauty is bought by the judgment of the eye, not made available by the base sale of merchants’ tongues — the flattering praise of merchants trying to sell stuff by calling it beautiful is worthless. I am less proud to hear you count — spell out — my worth than you are much willing to be accounted wise because you spend your wit in the flattering praise of mine.

“But now to task the tasker: You have been tasking me with your false flattery of my ‘beauty,’ and now I have a task for you. Good Boyet, you are not ignorant that all-telling rumor has noised abroad that the King of Navarre has made a vow that until painstaking and diligent study has worn away three years, no woman may approach his silent court.”

Using the royal plural, she said, “Therefore to us it seems a necessary course of action, before we enter his forbidden gates, to know what he wants us to do, and in that behalf and for that purpose, confident of your worthiness, we single you out as our best-moving and most persuasive fair solicitor.

“Tell him that the daughter of the King of France, on serious business, craving quick dispatch of that business, importunes personal conversation with his grace.

“Go quickly to him and say all this, while we wait, like humble-faced petitioners, to learn what his high will desires.”

Boyet replied, “Proud to be entrusted with this employment, willingly I go.”

“All pride is willing pride, and yours is so,” the Princess of France replied. “All pride, including yours, originates in the will — the wish or desire.”

Boyet exited to carry out his errand.

The Princess of France asked, “Who are the votaries, my loving lords, who are vow-fellows with this virtuous Duke?”

Votaries are people who have taken an oath or vow.

The first lord said, "Lord Longaville is one."

The Princess asked, "Do you know the man?"

Maria said, "I know him, madam. At a feast celebrating the marriage between Lord Perigort and the beautiful heir of Jaques Falconbridge, which was solemnized in Normandy, I saw this Longaville. He is reputed to be a man of excellent personal qualities. He is interested in culture and arts, and he has a glorious reputation in military matters. He has both a contemplative and an active life. Everything that he puts his mind to becomes him — he does nothing ill that he wants to do well.

"The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss, if virtue's gloss will stain with any soil, is that his sharp wit is matched with too blunt a will. The edge of his wit has the power to cut, and his will always wills — wants — to spare none who come within his power."

The Princess said, "He is probably some merry mocking lord, isn't he?"

"So people say who most know his moods and disposition," Maria said.

"Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow," the Princess said, alluding to the proverb "Soon ripe; soon rotten."

She then asked, "Who are the rest of the votaries?"

Katherine said, "Another is the young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth, one of all whom virtue loves because they love virtue. He has the most power to do most harm, although he least knows evil, because he has the intelligence to make an ill bodily shape seem to be good, and he has a bodily shape that would win grace and favor even if he had no intelligence. I saw him at the Duke Alençon's once; and my report of his goodness falls very short of his great worthiness."

Rosaline said, "Another of these students was at that time there with Dumain, if I have heard the truth. Biron they call him, and some people called him by the nickname Berowne, which sounds like a sad name — Brown. But a merrier man, within the limit of becoming and suitable mirth, I never spent an hour's talking with. His eye begets occasion for his wit; for every object that his eye catches, his wit turns to a mirth-moving jest, which his fair tongue — the expresser of his fancy — delivers in such apt and gracious words that aged ears play truant and avoid listening to serious discussions in order to listen to his tales and his younger hearers are quite ravished with delight, so sweet and voluble is his discourse."

"God bless my ladies!" the Princess said. "Are they all in love, causing each to garnish her beloved with such adorning ornaments of praise?"

The first lord said, "Here comes Boyet."

Boyet walked over to the group.

The Princess asked, "Now, what admittance shall we enjoy, lord? Shall we be admitted into the palace?"

"The King of Navarre had notice of your fair approach," Boyet replied, "and he and his associates in their oath were all ready to meet you, gentle lady, before I came. Indeed, thus

much I have learned. He means to lodge you outdoors, in this field, like one who comes here to besiege his court in wartime, rather than to seek a dispensation for his oath, a dispensation that would let you enter his house, which now lacks servants.”

King Ferdinand needed fewer servants because of his avowed dedication to study.

Boyet looked up and said, “Here comes the King of Navarre.”

King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, Dumain, and some attendants walked over to the group.

King Ferdinand said, “Fair Princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.”

The Princess replied, “The word ‘fair’ I give you back again, and ‘welcome’ I have not yet had. The roof of this court — the sky — is too high to be yours; and a welcome to the wide fields is too base to be mine.”

“You shall be welcome, madam, to my court,” King Ferdinand said.

“I will be welcome, then,” the Princess said. “Conduct me there.”

“Hear me, dear lady,” King Ferdinand said. “I have sworn an oath.”

“May our Lady help my lord!” the Princess said. “He’ll be forsworn and break his oath.”

Our Lady is Mary, the mother of Jesus.

“Not for the world, fair madam, by my will,” King Ferdinand said.

“By my will” was an oath: “I swear.”

“Why, will shall break it,” the Princess said. “Will and nothing else.”

In her reply, the Princess used “will” to mean both “willpower” and “desire.” King Ferdinand’s willpower would cause him to break the oath because he desired to break it; in other words, he could break his oath if he chose to, and desire would make him want to and so he would choose to break his oath.

“Your ladyship is ignorant about what my oath is,” King Ferdinand said.

The Princess said, “If my lord were ignorant about the content of his oath, his ignorance would be wise, whereas now his knowledge is evidence of his ignorance.

“I hear that your grace has sworn not to be hospitable. It is a deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord, and it is a sin to break it.

“But pardon me. I am too sudden-bold, too hastily presumptuous. To teach an academic — and you are one because you have chosen to pursue knowledge for three years — ill becomes me.

“Please read the purpose of my coming here, and quickly give me a response concerning my petition to you.”

“Madam, I will, if quickly I may,” King Ferdinand said.

“You will give me a reply all the sooner, so that I can go away,” the Princess said, “for you’ll prove perjured if you make me stay.”

The Princess handed King Ferdinand a document that the King began reading.

Biron asked Rosaline, “Didn’t I dance with you in Brabant once?”

Rosaline asked Biron, “Didn’t I dance with you in Brabant once?”

“I know you did,” Biron said.

“How needless it was then to ask me that question!” Rosaline said.

“You must not be so quick,” Biron said, using the word “quick” to mean “impatient, hot-tempered, and sharp and caustic.”

Rosaline, deliberately misinterpreting the word “quick” to mean “fast,” replied, “My quickness is due to you who spurs me with such questions.”

She was alluding to the proverb “Do not spur a willing horse.”

Biron said, “Your wit’s too hot, it speeds too fast, it will tire.”

He was alluding to the proverb “A free horse will soon tire.” A free horse is one that has been given the reins; it can run freely without the rider restraining its speed.

Rosaline replied, “Not until it leaves the rider in the mire.”

She had no intention of reining in — restraining — her wit.

In an attempt to change the subject, Biron asked, “What time of day is it?”

Rosaline replied, “The hour that fools should ask about.”

“Now may fair — good luck — befall your mask!” Biron said.

Like the other noble ladies of the time, Rosaline sometimes wore a mask to protect her face from the Sun when she was outside and she sometimes attended masquerades, but she was not currently wearing a mask.

Rosaline said, “May fair befall the face it covers! May the face under the mask be beautiful!”

“And may your beautiful face send you many loving admirers!” Biron said.

“Amen, as long as you make up none of my many loving admirers!” Rosaline said.

“No, for then I will be gone,” Biron said.

Having finished reading the document, and occasionally using the royal plural, King Ferdinand said, “Madam, your father here in this document states that he made the payment of a hundred thousand crowns. That amount is only one half of the entire sum disbursed by my father in the wars waged by your father.

“But let’s say that my father or I myself, although neither of us has, received that sum, yet there remains unpaid a hundred thousand more crowns. In security of that loan, one part of the territory of Aquitaine is legally bound to us here in Navarre, although it is not valued as highly as the money that was loaned.

“If then the King your father will restore to us just that one half which is unsettled because it has not been repaid, we will give up our rights in Aquitaine, and we will hold and enjoy fair friendship with his majesty your father.

“But that repayment, it seems, he little intends, because here in this document he demands that we repay the hundred thousand crowns that he claims to have already paid us, and he does not demand, as is his right, on payment to us of a hundred thousand crowns, to have his title to all of Aquitaine restored. He wants us to repay money that we never received, and he wants us to keep our title to part of Aquitaine. We would much rather give up our title to part of Aquitaine and have the money repaid to us that our father lent your father. We prefer to have the money because Aquitaine, as it is, is gelded; it has been divided into two parts and the part we have title to is not worth the amount of money my father lent to your father.

“Dear Princess, were not your father’s requests so far from reason’s yielding — if they were not so unreasonable — your fair self should make a yielding against some reason in my breast. Your beautiful self would make me generous although right is on my side, and you would go well satisfied to France again.”

The Princess replied, “You do the King my father too much wrong, and you wrong the reputation of your name, by seeming not to confess having received that money which has so faithfully been repaid.”

“I protest that I never heard of the repayment of that money,” King Ferdinand said, “and if you can prove that the money has been repaid, I’ll repay it back to the King of France or yield to him Aquitaine.”

“We arrest your word,” the Princess said. “We seize upon your word as surety that you will do what you just said you will do.”

She then said, “Boyet, you can produce acquittances — legal documents showing that the money has been repaid — for such a sum from special officers of Charles, the King of Navarre’s father.”

“Satisfy me that this is so,” King Ferdinand said. “Produce the documents.”

Boyet said, “So please your grace, the packet containing those and other legal documents has not yet come. Tomorrow you shall be able to see them.”

“That shall be sufficient for me,” King Ferdinand said. “At that time I will yield to all reasonable demands. In the meantime, receive such welcome at my hand as honor without breach of honor may make tender of to your true worthiness.

“You may not come, fair Princess, within my gates, but here outside my gates you shall be so received that you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart, although you are denied fair harbor in my house.

“Your own good thoughts will excuse me, and so farewell. Tomorrow we shall visit you again.”

The Princess said, “May sweet health and fair desires accompany your grace!”

“Your own wish I wish for you in every aspect!” King Ferdinand said, and then he exited.

Biron said to Rosaline, "Lady, I will commend you to my own heart."

"Please, give my commendations to your heart," Rosaline said. "I would be glad to see it."

"I wish you could hear it groan," Biron said. He was feeling lovesick.

"Is the fool sick?" Rosaline asked.

"Sick at heart."

"Alas, treat your illness by bleeding."

In this society, physicians treated many illnesses by bleeding the patient. Physicians felt that bleeding would help restore the proper proportion of the four humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. Today, we know that this is quackery.

Biron asked, "Would bleeding my heart do any good?"

"My medical knowledge says that yes, it would."

"Will you prick my heart with your eye?"

In this society, a person in love was thought to shoot a beam out of his or her eyes. The beam would enter the eyes of the loved one and go straight to his or her heart.

Rosaline replied, "*Non point*, but I would with my knife."

"*Non point*" was French for "No point," which has two meanings. Rosaline was saying there was no point to doing as Biron suggested, and her eye had no point and so was incapable of piercing his heart. In contrast, a knife could do that very easily with its point.

"Now, may God save your life!" Biron said.

"And may God save yours from long living!" Rosaline said.

"I cannot stay and give you thanks," Biron said.

He withdrew.

Dumain said to Boyet, "Sir, please, let me have a word with you. What lady is she whom I was talking to?"

"She is the heir of Alencon; Katherine is her name."

"She is a gallant lady. Monsieur, fare you well."

Dumain exited.

Longaville asked Boyet, "Please, let me have a word with you. Who is she in the white dress?"

"She is a woman sometimes, if you saw her in the light."

"Perhaps she is light in the light," Longaville said.

He was punning. Perhaps she would be revealed as a light — promiscuous — woman if seen in the light — if seen properly.

He then said, "I desire her name."

“She has but one for herself; to desire that would be a shame,” Boyet replied.

Longaville asked, “Please, sir, whose daughter is she?”

“Her mother’s, I have heard.”

“God’s blessing on your beard!” Longaville said.

He was making the point that Boyet’s venerable beard was inconsistent with the joking answers he was making to Longaville’s questions. A person capable of growing a beard like that should give serious answers to serious questions.

“Good sir, be not offended,” Boyet said. “She is an heir of Falconbridge.”

“My anger is ended,” Longaville said. “She is a very sweet lady.”

“That is not unlikely, sir,” Boyet said. “That may be the truth.”

Longaville exited.

Biron asked Boyet, “What’s the name of the woman wearing the cap?”

“Rosaline, by good hap,” Boyet replied. “Rosaline, it so happens.”

“Is she wedded or no?”

“She is wedded to her will, sir, or something like that.”

One meaning of the word “will” was “sexual desire.”

What does “something like that” mean? Biron will find out that Rosaline is single, and so, if Boyet’s insinuation is correct, she is a single woman who pursues satisfying her sexual desires.

“You are welcome, sir,” Biron said. “Adieu.”

Biron’s tone was angry because he was not getting a serious answer to his question. Some welcomes are ill. He also did not want to hear that a woman he had fallen in love with was wanton. When he said that Boyet was welcome, he may have been punning: Boyet was well cum — had cum well — as a result of spending time with Rosaline. Personal experience would be one way for Boyet to know that Rosaline was wedded to her will, or something like that.

“Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you,” Boyet replied.

“Welcome to you” meant “You are welcome to go.” A proverb of the time stated, “Welcome when you go.” Again, some welcomes are ill.

Boyet may have meant this: “I will fare well when you go, and be assured that the next time I welcome you, I will again have well cum.”

Some people can say, “Welcome,” and make it sound nasty. Boyet was one such person.

Biron exited.

Maria said, “That last man to leave is Biron, the merry madcap lord. You can’t speak to him without hearing a jest — not a word with him but a jest.”

“And every jest is only a word,” Boyet said.

The Princess said, “It was well done of you to take him at his word — you gave him word for word. He likes to engage in argumentative exchanges of words, and you did that.”

It is true that Biron liked to engage in wordplay, sometimes malicious, but his questions to Boyet were serious. Boyet, however, was a ladies’ man, and he saw in Biron a threat. Here was a case of two men — Biron and Boyet — disliking each other almost at first sight.

“I was as willing to grapple as he was to board,” Boyet said.

Boyet was referring to warfare. Two ships would sometimes use grappling hooks to get the ships next to each other so that a ship could be boarded and the sailors fight face to face.

If Biron wanted to board something, that something would be Rosaline’s body, but Boyet was willing to grapple with him to keep that from happening, possibly because he wanted to board her — and all the other ladies present.

Note that Rosaline was quiet. Did she not hear Boyet and Biron talking, or was she embarrassed and pretending that she had not heard their conversation?

Maria said, “You were two hot sheeps, indeed.”

Biron and Boyet had fought like two angry rams butting horns to see which ram would be able to mate.

Much of the two men’s dislike for each other showed in their body language, but some showed in the tone of their words to each other.

“Why not use the word ‘ships’ instead of ‘sheeps’?” Boyet asked. “We are no sheep, you sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips.”

“You sheep, and I pastor,” Maria said. “Shall that finish the jest?”

“So long as you grant pasture for me,” Boyet said, moving to kiss her.

Maria stopped the kiss and said, “Not so, gentle beast. My lips are no common, though several they be.”

She was punning. A common is pastureland held in common; any citizen can use it. Pastureland that is referred to as several, however, is privately owned. It is severed — separate — from common land. Maria was saying that her lips were privately owned, by herself, and they were several — more than one.

“Your lips belong to whom?” Boyet asked.

“To my fortunes and me,” Maria said.

“Good wits will be jangling, aka squabbling,” the Princess said, “but, gentlefolk, agree that this civil war of wits would be much better used on the King of Navarre and his fellow book-men; for here such verbal wrangling is misapplied.”

Boyet said, “If my observation, which very seldom lies — that is, is mistaken — of the heart’s silent eloquence as disclosed by eyes doesn’t deceive me now, the King of Navarre is infected.”

“With what?” the Princess asked.

“With that which we lovers title ‘affected,’” Boyet replied. “He is in love.”

“What is your reason for believing that?” the Princess asked.

“Why, all his powers of expression retired to the court of his eye, peeping through desire — all he could do was to look at you with desire.

“His heart, like an agate, with your print impressed, proud with its form, in his eye pride expressed.”

Agate stones were sometimes engraved with the image of a person. Boyet was saying that King Ferdinand’s heart was proud because it bore the Princess’ image, and this pride was expressed in the King’s eyes.

Boyet continued, “His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see, stumbled with haste in his eyesight to be.”

In other words, King Ferdinand’s tongue was annoyed because it had the power only to speak and was unable to see the Princess’ beauty, and so it wanted to be capable of sight. Because of this, King Ferdinand’s tongue stumbled when he talked to the Princess because his tongue was metaphorically hurrying to his eyes to share in the eyesight.

Boyet continued, “All senses to that sense — the sense of sight — did make their repair, to feel only through looking on the fairest of fair.”

In Boyet’s verbal image, all of King Ferdinand’s other senses gave primacy to the sense of sight because that is the sense that sees the fairest of fair — the most beautiful of all, who is the Princess. His other senses hoped to share in the sense of sight and to share in the emotion aroused by that sense and so rushed to the King’s eyes.

Boyet continued, “It seemed to me that all his senses were locked in his eye, like jewels in crystal for some Prince or Princess to buy, which, tendering their own worth from where they were glassed, did point you to buy them, along as you passed.”

Jewels were sometimes carried in a crystal — glass — container so that prosperous buyers could look at them. The King’s senses had, in Boyet’s visual image, rushed to the crystal of the King’s eyes and could now be seen as if they were jewels displayed in a glass container. The Princess could, if she looked, see them, and if she wanted, she could buy and possess them.

Boyet continued, “His face’s own margins quoted such amazes that all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.”

In Boyet’s verbal image, the King’s face was a page in a book. His eyes were the main text, and the rest of his face was the margins. In books of the time, notes appeared in the margins, including the left and right margins, rather than only as footnotes. Often, the notes included arrows pointing to a place in the main text. The rest of the King’s face directed attention to the King’s eyes, where readers could see that the King was enchanted by seeing the Princess.

Boyet concluded, “I’ll give you Aquitaine and all that is his, if you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.”

Boyet believed that King Ferdinand was so in love with the Princess that if she gave him only one kiss, he would give her Aquitaine and everything else that belonged to him.

“Let’s go to our pavilion,” the Princess said. “Boyet is disposed.”

She meant that he was disposed to be merry and make jokes.

Boyet said, “I am disposed only to speak that in words which the King’s eyes have disclosed. I have only made a mouth of his eye, by adding a tongue that I know will not lie. All I have done is to say in words what the King’s eyes were saying in looks.”

Rosaline said, “You are an old love-monger — trafficker in love — and you speak skillfully and cleverly.”

Maria said, “He is Cupid’s grandfather and learns news from Cupid.”

Rosaline said, “Then Venus resembles her mother and not her father, for her father is only grim.”

Venus, the beautiful and fun-loving goddess of love, was Cupid’s mother. If Boyet were Cupid’s grandfather, he would be Venus’ father. Rosaline meant that Venus must get her beauty from her mother, not from her father.

“Do you hear, my mad wenches?” Boyet asked. “Are you listening to me?”

“No,” Maria said.

“Well, then, do you see?” Boyet asked.

He meant this: Do you see what I am trying to tell you?

Rosaline replied, “Yes, we see — our way to be gone.”

“You are too hard — too difficult — for me,” Boyet replied.

Boyet was a ladies’ man, but the ladies had defeated him. He had not succeeded in even getting a kiss.

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

Don Adriano de Armado and Mote, his page, talked together in King Ferdinand's park.

Armado said, "Warble, child; make passionate my sense of hearing."

He wanted Mote to sing a passionate love song.

Mote sang a song titled "Concolinel."

After the song was over, Armado said, "Sweet air! Go, tenderness of years; take this key, give enlargement to the swain, bring him festinately hither. I must employ him in a letter to my love."

As usual, Armado was using fancy language. "Tenderness of years" was a way of referring to the young boy: Mote. The swain was the yokel Costard, and "festinately" meant "quickly" and was derived from the Latin "*festina*," which means "hurry."

Mote asked, "Master, will you win your love with a French brawl?"

"How meanest thou?" Armado asked. "Brawling in French?"

Actually, a French brawl was a French dance in which the dancers moved sideways.

"No, my complete master," Mote replied, "but to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humor it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometimes through the throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love, and sometimes through the nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling love."

Mote was describing a lover — but an odd lover. This lover would sing a song as if it were a jig — a lively dance. The lover would also dance as he sang — he would move his feet as if he were dancing the dance known as the canary — a lively Spanish dance. At the same time as he was moving his feet, he would sigh a note and sing a note, and sometimes the note would come through his throat and sometimes it would come through his nose.

Mote then began describing the way that Armado ought to dress if he were a stereotypical lover: "Wear your hat penthouse-like over the shop of your eyes; have your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket like a man in imitation of the old painting that I know you have seen."

Shops sometimes had penthouses: projecting roofs. Mote was saying that lovers wore hats with broad brims. They also were thin because they wasted away with longing because they could not eat, and they either kept their arms crossed across their chest or they kept their hands in their pockets. Some painters painted portraits in which the subjects' hands were kept in pockets because hands can be difficult to paint.

Mote continued with an additional detail of how Armado the lover ought to act: "Don't keep too long singing one tune, but sing only a snippet."

Why ought Armado the lover to act this way?

Mote said, "These are lovers' behaviors and manners; these are lovers' moods; these are the things that betray and seduce coy wenches, who would be betrayed and seduced even without these. In addition, these things make them men of note — do you note me? Are you paying attention to me? The men most inclined to do these things become men of reputation."

Armado asked, "How hast thou purchased this experience? How do you know this?"

Mote answered, "By my pennyworth of observation."

Armado began to speak, "But oh —"

Unable to come up with the right words, he repeated himself, "But oh —"

Mote sang a line from a popular song: "*For oh, for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot.*"

In some dances, the dancers wore a hobby-horse — a figure of a horse that was attached to their waist. It made a comic image since the dancer appeared to be on horseback. "Hobby-horse" was also slang for "prostitute."

Armado asked, "Callest thou my love a 'hobby-horse'?"

"No, master," Mote replied, "the hobby-horse is only a colt, and your love perhaps is a hackney."

A colt was an uncut — uncastrated — young male horse, but the word "colt" was used to describe a lascivious person of either sex. A "hackney horse" was a horse for hire, and the word "hackney" was slang for "prostitute."

Mote added, "But have you forgotten your love?"

"Almost I had," Armado said.

"Negligent student!" Mote said. "Learn her by heart."

"By heart and in heart, boy."

"And out of heart, master. All those three I will prove."

"What wilt thou prove?" Armado asked.

"I'll prove to be a man, if I live," Mote said. "And now I will prove this: You love her by, in, and without your heart."

"By heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by — possess — her."

"In heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her."

"And out of heart you love her — you are out of heart because you cannot enjoy her."

Armado said, "I am all these three, just as you said."

Mote thought, *And you are three times as much more, and yet nothing at all. You are still a zero.*

Armado ordered Mote, "Fetch hither the swain: Costard. He must deliver a letter for me."

Mote said to himself, "This is a message well sympathized and fittingly contrived; a horse will be ambassador for an ass."

Armado was the ass; the horse was Costard, who would deliver the letter. To be called either an ass or a horse was an insult.

"What sayest thou?" Armado asked.

Mote said, "Indeed, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse, for he is very slow-gaited."

To keep out of trouble, Mote was now referring to Costard as the ass. Because the ass moved slowly, he needed to be sent on horseback to perform his errand of delivering the letter.

Mote said, "But I go now. I ought to leave and get Costard."

"The way is very short. Away! Go!" Armado said.

"I go as swiftly as lead, sir," Mote replied.

"What is your meaning, my pretty ingenious page? Is not lead a metal that is heavy, dull, and slow?"

"*Minime*, honest master; or rather, master, no," Mote replied.

The word "*minime*" is Latin for "not at all."

"I say lead is slow," Armado stated.

"You are too swift, sir, to say so," Mote said. "Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun? Are lead bullets slow?"

"Sweet smoke of rhetoric!" Armado said. "He reposes me a cannon; and the bullet, that's he. I shoot thee at the swain."

"'Bang!' goes the cannon, and away I flee," Mote said.

He exited.

Alone, Armado said to himself, "Mote is a most acute juvenal; he is voluble and free of grace!"

By "juvenal," Armado meant "juvenile," but Mote was also a satirist — a funny critic — like the Roman poet Juvenal.

Armado continued, "By thy favor, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face."

The welkin is the sky.

He continued, "Most rude melancholy, valor gives place to thee. I am now melancholy rather than valorous."

He then looked up and said, "My herald is returned."

Mote returned with Costard.

Mote said, "Here is a wonder, master! Here's a costard that has broken a shin."

The word ‘costard’ meant either an apple or a head, neither of which has a shin — the lower part of a leg.

Armado said, “Here is some enigma, some riddle. Come, thy *l’envoi*; begin.”

He was asking for a *l’envoi*, which was the conclusion of a piece of writing and which often explained the writing’s moral.

Costard, however, thought that Armado was referring to a treatment for a broken shin.

Costard said, “No egma, no riddle, no *l’envoi*; no salve in the mail, sir. Oh, sir, plantain, a plain plantain! No *l’envoi*, no *l’envoi*; no salve, sir, but a plantain!”

“Egma” was the way Costard pronounced “enigma.”

The treatment that Costard wanted was the leaves of the plantain plant. He did not want what he thought were the treatments called egma, riddle, *l’envoi*, and salve in the mail — a mail was a kind of bag.

Knowing that Costard was mistaken about the meaning of *l’envoi*, Armado said, “By my virtue, thou enforcest laughter; thy silly thought affects my spleen; the heaving of my lungs provokes me to ridiculous smiling. Oh, pardon me, my stars! Doth the inconsiderate take salve for *l’envoi*, and the word ‘*l’envoi*’ for a salve?”

Mote asked, “Do the wise think them to be otherwise? Is not *l’envoi* a salve?”

*L’envoi* was a written conclusion, or an author’s farewell. The Latin word “*salve*,” which has two syllables, was used both as a greeting and as a farewell.

“No, page,” Armado said. “The word ‘*l’envoi*’ is an epilogue or discourse, to make plain some obscure precedence that has tofore been sain.”

The archaic word “sain” meant “said,” but the word “written” was the right word and it should have been used. The archaic word “tofore” meant “earlier.”

Armado said, “I will example it: The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee, were still at odds, being but three. There’s the moral. Now the *l’envoi*.”

Mote said, “I will add the *l’envoi*. Say the moral again.”

Armado repeated, “The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee, were still at odds, being but three.”

Mote said, “Until the goose came out of door, and ended the odds by adding number four.”

Mote then said, “Now I will begin with your moral, and you follow the moral with my *l’envoi*.”

He said the moral: “The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee, were still at odds, being but three.”

Armado said, “Until the goose came out of door, ending the odds by adding number four.”

Mote said, “This is a good *l’envoi* because it ends in the goose.”

The French word for “goose” is *oie*, which is the same sound as the ending of *l’envoi*. The joke had ended with Armado saying the word “goose” — the end of the joke was “goose,” aka Armado.

Mote asked, “Would you desire more?”

Costard, realizing that Mote had called Armado a goose, aka a fool, said, “The boy has sold him a bargain, a goose, that’s flat.”

A person who has been sold a bargain has been made a fool of.

Costard said to Mote, “Sir, your pennyworth is good, if your goose be fat. To sell a bargain well is as cunning as the con game called fast and loose. Let me see, a fat *l’envoi* — aye, that’s a fat goose.”

Armado said, “Come hither, come hither. How did this conversation begin?”

Mote replied, “It began by saying that a costard had broken a shin, and then you called for the *l’envoi*.”

“True,” Costard said, “and then I called for plantain leaves. Then came in the rest of the conversation: the boy’s fat *l’envoi*, the goose that you bought; and he ended the market.”

A proverb of the time stated, “Three women and a goose make a market.” Once the goose is sold, the market is over.

Armado asked, “But tell me; how was there a costard broken in a shin?”

Mote said, “I will tell you sensibly.”

By “sensibly,” Mote meant, “in an easily understandable and commonsense way,” but Costard misunderstood “sensibly” to mean “with real emotion.”

Costard objected, “You have no feeling of it, Mote. I will speak that *l’envoi*: I, Costard, running out, that was safely within, fell over the threshold and broke my shin.”

One interpretation of Costard’s words is that as he was running from inside a building to outside the building, he tripped on the threshold and hurt his shin.

But the words supported another interpretation: Costard was having sex, he ejaculated — his semen ran out of his penis as it was safely inside a vagina — but as he attempted one additional thrust his penis slipped out and was injured at the threshold — entrance — of the vagina. He thrust, missed the opening of the vagina, and bent his penis. In this interpretation, Costard’s penis is a third leg.

Armado said, “We will talk no more of this matter.”

Costard replied, “Until there be more matter — pus — in the injured shin.”

Armado said, “Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.”

Costard misunderstood; he thought that Armado had said, “Sirrah Costard, I will in-Frances thee.”

In this society, “Frances” was a common name for prostitutes.

Costard replied, “Oh, marry me to one Frances: I smell some *l’envoi*, some goose, in this.”

“Goose” was a slang word for “prostitute.”

Armado said, "By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty, enfreedoming thy person; thou wert immured, restrained, captivated, bound."

Costard replied, "True, true; and now you will be my purgation and let me loose."

One interpretation of this exchange, of course, is Costard was bound in prison and now Armado was going to clear — purge — him of his crime and set him loose.

But the words supported another interpretation: Costard's bowels were bound up — he was constipated. Armado was going to purge him — give him a laxative. This would loosen Costard's bowels so that he could defecate.

Armado said, "I give thee thy liberty, set thee free from durance; and, in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this: Bear this significant to the country maid Jaquenetta."

The "significant" was a letter that he gave to Costard.

Armado gave Costard some money and said, "Here is remuneration; for the best ward of mine honor is rewarding my dependents."

"The best ward of mine honor is rewarding my dependents" meant "The best way to defend my honor is to reward my servants."

Armado ordered, "Mote, follow," and then he exited.

Mote said, "Like the sequel, I follow. Signior Costard, adieu."

Costard said, "My sweet ounce of man's flesh! My incony Jew!"

"Incony" meant "darling," and "Jew" was Costard's way of shortening "juvenile."

Mote exited.

Alone, Costard said to himself, "Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration! Oh, that's the Latin word for 'three farthings': 'three farthings' equals a 'remuneration.'"

A farthing was worth one quarter of a penny.

Costard continued, "I will say, 'What's the price of this inkle — this linen yarn?'"

"Back comes the reply, 'One penny.'

"I will bargain and say, 'No, I'll give you a remuneration.'

"Why, it carries it away and wins the day. Remuneration! Why, it is a fairer name than 'French crown.' I will never buy and sell without using this word."

Biron walked over to Costard and said, "Oh, my good knave Costard! We are exceedingly well met."

"Please, sir," Costard said, "how much carnation-colored ribbon may a man buy for a remuneration?"

"What is a remuneration?" Biron asked.

"Indeed, sir, it is a halfpenny farthing."

A halfpenny was worth two farthings, and a halfpenny farthing was worth three farthings.

“Why, then, three farthings’ worth of silk,” Biron said.

“I thank your worship,” Costard said. “May God be with you!”

Costard started to leave, and Biron said, “Stay, rascal. I must employ thee on an errand. If you want to win my favor, my good knave, do one thing for me that I shall entreat you to do.”

“When would you have it done, sir?” Costard asked.

“This afternoon.”

“Well, I will do it, sir,” Costard said. “Fare you well.”

Again, he started to leave, but Biron said, “You don’t know what it is that I want you to do.”

“I shall know, sir, when I have done it,” Costard replied.

“Why, villain, you must know first what I want done.”

“I will come to your worship tomorrow morning to find out.”

“It must be done this afternoon,” Biron said. “Listen, rascal, what I want you to do is only this: The Princess comes to hunt here in the park, and in her train there is a noble lady; when tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name, and Rosaline they call her. Ask for her, and to her white hand see that you hand over this sealed confidential letter.”

This society valued pale skin and so Biron flattered Rosaline by referring to what he called her “white hand.” But Rosaline was the darkest of the three women — Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine — and for many people in this society that made her the ugliest of the three.

He handed Costard the letter and a shilling and said, “There’s the letter and your guerdon; now go.”

A shilling is worth twelve pence, so Biron had tipped much more generously than Armado.

Mispronouncing “guerdon,” which means “reward,” Costard said, “Gardon! Oh, sweet gardon! Better than remuneration! It is eleven-pence farthing better! Most sweet gardon!”

“*Gardon*” is French for “cockroach.”

Eleven-pence farthing plus three farthings equals twelve pence. Biron’s guerdon of twelve-pence was eleven-pence farthing more than Armado’s remuneration of three farthings.

Costard said to Biron, “I will do your errand, sir, in print. I will do it to the letter. Gardon! Remuneration!”

Costard exited.

Alone, Biron said to himself, “And I, indeed, am in love! I, who have been love’s whip, a very beadle to a lovesick sigh, a censurer, nay, a night-watch constable, a domineering pedantic schoolmaster over the boy Cupid, than whom no mortal is as arrogant and proud!”

Biron was saying that he had always kept tight control of himself when it came to love. He had been like a beadle or a night-watch constable who caught prostitutes and gave them their legal

punishment of a whipping. He, Biron, had been the adult master of the boy Cupid.

Biron continued, "Cupid is this blindfolded, whining, completely blind, wayward boy."

Cupid was often depicted blindfolded because love is blind.

Biron continued, "He is this senior-junior, this giant-dwarf, this Dan Cupid."

Cupid was senior and junior; he was the oldest and the youngest of gods. Love had brought order out of chaos at the beginning of the world, and so Cupid was the most senior god. However, Cupid was always depicted as a young boy, and so he was also the most junior of the gods.

Cupid was depicted as a boy, but as the god of love, he had much power. And so he was a "giant-dwarf."

"Dan Cupid" meant "Don Cupid." "Don" was a respectful title meaning "sir."

Biron continued, "Cupid is the regent of love-rhymes, the lord of folded arms, the anointed sovereign of sighs and groans, the liege of all loiterers and malcontents, the dread Prince of plackets, the King of codpieces, sole Emperor and great General of trotting apparitors."

Male lovers were stereotypically depicted with folded arms or with their hands in their pockets. Plackets were literally openings in ladies' petticoats and therefore metaphorically referred to female genitalia. A codpiece was literally a pouch that was fitted to a man's breeches and which covered the genitals and therefore metaphorically referred to male genitalia. Apparitors were legal officers who summoned sex offenders to appear in court.

Biron continued, "Oh, my little heart! And I am to be a Corporal of his field, and wear his regimental colors like an acrobat's hoop with its brightly colored ribbons!

"What, I! I love! I woo! I seek a wife!

"A woman is like a German clock, very complex and breaking, always being repaired, forever out of order, and never going right, being a watch, but needing to be watched so that it may still go right!"

Biron's view of women was poor: Women needed to be constantly watched lest they commit adultery.

Biron continued, "Because I am in love, I will be perjured, which is worst of all; I will break my vow.

"And, among the three women — Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine — I love the worst of all. She is wightly — unfortunately — wanton with a forehead as soft and smooth as velvet, with two pitch-black balls stuck in her face for eyes. Yes, and by Heaven, she is one who will do the deed and have illicit sex even though Argus the hundred-eyed monster were her eunuch and her guard."

Eunuchs — castrated men — were used to guard harems in some societies to avoid any chance of the guards sleeping with members of the harem.

Biron continued, "And I to sigh for her! To stay awake at night so that I can watch her lest she commit adultery! To pray for her!

“Bah! This is a plague that Cupid will impose on me to punish me for my neglect of his almighty dreadful little might.

“Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, woo, and groan.

“Some men must love my lady, and some men must love Joan.”

“Joan” was used to refer to a lower-class woman. Biron had in mind the proverb “Joan is as good as my lady in the dark.” “My lady” was used to refer to an upper-class woman.

Biron was in love, but he honestly felt that he was in love with the worst of the three women the Princess had brought with her from France.

Why would he think this? After all, he hardly knows her and he hardly knows anything about her.

Boyet is the reason. Boyet had managed to convey the impression in a very brief conversation that he had slept with Rosaline.

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

The Princess was going hunting in King Ferdinand's park. With her was her train of attendants and a forester, as well as Boyet, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine.

The Princess asked, "Was that the King — that man whom we saw spurring his horse so hard up the virtually perpendicular hill?"

"I don't know," Boyet replied, "but I don't think it was he."

"Whoever he was, he showed a mounting mind," the Princess said.

Members of this society enjoyed joking about sex, and some of her listeners may have thought about a man mounting a woman.

The Princess continued, "Well, lords, today we shall have our dispatch: We will have completed our diplomatic mission and will have official leave to go. On Saturday we will return to France."

"So then, forester, my friend, where is the bush where we must stand and play the murderer in?"

Part of the official entertainment for the Princess was hunting deer. She was being taken to a place from which she could shoot an arrow at a deer. Although she did not care for hunting, part of being a good guest and ambassador involved participating in the entertainment arranged by the host.

The forester replied, "Nearby, upon the edge of yonder coppice of trees, is the stand — the hunter's station — where you may make the fairest shoot."

The fairest shoot was the best shot, but the Princess deliberately misinterpreted the words "fairest shoot" in part to mean "the most beautiful growing thing."

She said, "I thank my beauty. I am fair and I am alive and growing and I shoot, and because of that you speak about the fairest shoot."

"Pardon me, madam, for I did not mean it that way," the forester said.

He did not want the Princess to think that he, a commoner, was flirting with her.

"What! What!" The Princess was in a joking mood. "First you praise me and then you take it back! Oh, short-lived pride! I am not fair! I am not beautiful! Alas and woe!"

"Yes, madam, you are fair," the forester said. "You are beautiful."

"Nay, never flatter me now," the Princess said. "Where fair beauty is not, flattering praise cannot mend the brow and make a face beautiful. Here, my good and honest looking-glass, take this for telling the truth."

She handed him some money and said, "Fair payment for foul words is more than due."

"Nothing but fair is that which you have," the forester said.

“See! See! My beauty will be saved by merit!” the Princess said. “Oh, heresy in fair, fit for these days! A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.”

Roman Catholics believed that merit, such as that gotten by doing good works, was important in achieving salvation, in contrast to Protestants, who emphasized the importance of faith. The Princess’ merit was giving the forester a tip, and that had achieved salvation for her beauty — after receiving the tip, the forester had said that she is beautiful.

The Princess then said, “But come, the bow. Now mercy goes to kill, and shooting well is then accounted ill.”

Although she preferred to be merciful and not kill a deer, part of her duty as ambassador was to hunt; unfortunately, if she shot well and killed a deer, it would be ill for her reputation as a person who was merciful.

The Princess continued, “Thus will I save my reputation in the shoot. Not wounding, I will say that pity would not let me do it; if wounding, then I will say that it was to show my skill.”

If she missed the deer, she could say that she felt pity for it and so she had missed on purpose so that she would not hurt it. If her arrow hit the deer, then she could say that she had shot the deer in order to demonstrate her skill at archery.

She continued, “If I kill the deer, I can say that more for praise than purpose I meant to kill, and it is no question that sometimes the thirst for glory leads us to grow guilty of detested crimes, as when, for fame’s sake, for praise, an outward part, we bend to that the working of the heart, as I for praise alone now seek to spill the blood of a poor deer that my heart means no ill.”

If she would shoot the deer in order to show her skill, she would be shooting the deer in order to gain glory. In the Princess’ opinion, causing the deer pain and taking the deer’s life only in order to gain glory was a detestable sin.

Boyet said, “Don’t curst wives hold that self-sovereignty only for praise’s sake, when they strive to be lords over their lords?”

He was asking whether shrewish wives ordered their husbands around, rather than vice versa, only to gain praise.

The Princess answered, “Yes, they do it only for praise, and praise we may give to any lady who subdues a lord.”

“Here comes a member of the commonwealth,” Boyet said. “Here comes a citizen of this country.”

Costard walked over to the group and said, “May God give you all a good evening! Please, which of you is the head lady?”

“You shall know her, fellow, by the rest who have no heads,” the Princess said.

She may have been joking that Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine had no maidenheads — they were no longer virgins.

“Which is the greatest lady, the highest?” Costard asked.

“The greatest lady, the highest, is the thickest and the tallest,” the Princess said.

The thickest lady is the lady with the biggest waist.

“The thickest and the tallest!” Costard said. “It is so; truth is truth. If your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit, one of these maidens’ girdles for your waist should be fit. Aren’t you the chief woman? You are the thickest here.”

“What’s your will, sir?” the Princess asked. “What do you want?”

Costard replied, “I have a letter from Monsieur Biron to one Lady Rosaline.”

“Oh, your letter, your letter!” the Princess said, delighted and curious to know the contents of the letter. “Biron is a good friend of mine.”

She took a letter from Costard and said, “Stand aside, good letter bearer.”

Then she said, “Boyet, you can carve; break up this capon.”

A capon is a castrated rooster, aka cock, that has been fattened for the dinner table, but a capon is also a love letter. According to E. Cobham Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (1894), a capon is “A love-letter. In French, *poulet* means not only a chicken but also a love-letter, or a sheet of note-paper. Thus Henri IV., consulting with Sully about his marriage, says: ‘My niece of Guise would please me best, though report says maliciously that she loves poulets in paper better than in a fricasee.’”

To break up this capon meant to open the letter.

Of course, the Princess had witnessed the mean-spirited exchange of words between Boyet and Biron earlier. Remembering that may have caused her to think of a castrated cock when hearing of a love letter from Biron to Rosaline, and to refer to the letter in that way when asking Boyet to read it.

Boyet replied, “I am bound to serve.”

He looked at the letter and said, “This letter has been delivered to the wrong place; it concerns no one here. This letter is written to a woman named Jaquenetta.”

“We will read it, I swear,” the Princess said. “Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.”

“Break the neck of the wax” meant “Break the wax seal and open the letter,” but the Princess also had in mind breaking the neck of the capon, aka *poulet*.

Boyet read the letter, which was by Armado to Jaquenetta, out loud:

*“By Heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible; it is true that thou art beauteous; it is truth itself that thou art lovely. Thou, who are more fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal!”*

By “commiseration,” Armado meant “mercy.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

*“The magnanimous and most illustrious King Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitable beggar Zenelophon.”*

By “illustrate,” Armado meant “illustrious.” By the phrase “pernicious and indubitable,” Armado meant “indubitably penurious” or “definitely impoverished” — “pernicious” was a malapropism for “penurious.” In this passage, he was comparing himself to King Cophetua and Jaquenetta to the beggar Zenelophon; in fact, Armado had a higher social status than Jaquenetta.

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

*“And he it was that might rightly say, Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothanize in the vulgar, common language — oh, base and obscure vulgar! — videlicet, He came, see, and overcame: he came, one; see, two; overcame, three.”*

*Videlicet* is Latin for “namely.” Julius Caesar wrote the words “*Veni, vidi, vici*,” which mean “I came, I saw, I conquered.” Armado had a fondness for archaisms, and so he wrote the archaic past tense “I see” rather than the modern “I saw.”

By “annothanize,” Armado may have meant one or more of these meanings: “anatomize, explain, interpret, gloss, annotate.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

*“Who came? The King. Why did he come? To see. Why did he see? To overcome. To whom came he? To the beggar. What saw he? The beggar. Who overcame he? The beggar. The conclusion is victory. On whose side? The King’s. The captive is enriched. On whose side? The beggar’s. The catastrophe is a nuptial. On whose side? The King’s. No, on both in one, or one in both. I am the King; for so stands the comparison: thou art the beggar; for so witnesseth thy lowliness.”*

The word “catastrophe” means “denouement or outcome.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

*“Shall I command thy love? I may. Shall I enforce thy love? I could. Shall I entreat thy love? I will.”*

“To enforce thy love” means “to rape.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

*“What shalt thou exchange for rags? Robes. For tittles? Titles. For thyself? Me. Thus, expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thy every part. Thine, in the dearest design of industry,*

*“Signed, DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.”*

“Tittles” are tiny, insignificant things.

By “the dearest design of industry,” Armado meant “the most heartfelt undertaking of assiduous service to a lady.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

*“Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar ’gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey. Submissive fall his Princely feet before, and he from forage will incline to play. But if thou strive, poor soul, what art thou then? Food for his rage, repasture for his den.”*

The Nemean lion is the lion that Hercules killed as the first of his famous labors. Armado was referring to himself as the lion, and to Jaquenetta as the lion’s prey. The word “repasture” meant “repast”; in this case, it meant a meal in the lion’s den.

The Princess asked, “What plume of feathers is he who composed this letter? What weathervane? What weathercock? Did you ever hear better?”

A plume of feathers is metaphorically a showoff — someone who is capable of wearing feathers so that he will stand out. A weathervane is metaphorically a man who is very changeable — who constantly turns and changes similar to the way that a weathervane turns and changes with the wind. In referring to “weathervane,” the Princess was also punning on “vain.”

Boyet said, “I am much deceived if I do not remember the style.”

He meant that he remembered Armado using the same style in his speech as he had used in his letter.

“Or else your memory is bad, since you just read the letter and ought to remember its style,” the Princess said.

Boyet said, “This Armado is a Spaniard, who resides here in court; he is a phantasime, a Monarcho, and one who provides entertainment for the Prince — King Ferdinand — and his fellow bookmates.”

A phantasime is a person who behaves extravagantly.

Monarcho was the name of an insane Italian who entertained Queen Elizabeth I in her court; he believed that he was Emperor of the World.

The Princess said to Costard, “Fellow, I want a word with you. Who gave you this letter?”

“I told you,” Costard said. “My lord did.”

“To whom should you have given it?”

“From my lord to my lady.”

“From which lord to which lady?” the Princess asked.

“From my lord Biron, a good master of mine, to a lady of France whom he called Rosaline.”

“You have taken his letter to the wrong person,” the Princess said, but she did not return the letter to him.

She said, “Come, lords, away.”

She gave the letter to Rosaline and said, “Here, sweet, put this away. It will be your turn to receive a love letter some other day.”

The Princess and a train of her attendants exited.

Boyet asked Rosaline, “Who is the suitor? Who is the suitor?”

He was teasing her by asking who was wooing her and would send her a love letter, but he pronounced “suitor” almost exactly like “shooter.”

“Shall I teach you to know?” Rosaline asked.

“Yes, my container of beauty,” Boyet replied.

“Why, she who bears the bow,” Rosaline said, adding, “I have finely put off — avoided — your query!”

“My lady goes to kill horns,” Boyet said, “but, if you marry, hang me by the neck if horns that year miscarry —if they are in short supply.”

By “My lady goes to kill horns,” Boyet meant that his lady boss, the Princess, had left to shoot and kill a horned deer.

The other kind of horns were the horns of a cuckold; when a man had a cheating wife who cuckolded him, horns were said to grow on the man’s head. Boyet was joking that if Rosaline were to marry, there would be no lack of horns because she would be busy cuckolding her husband with many men.

He then said, “Finely put on — a hit! My insult has found its target!”

Rosaline said, “Well, then, I am the shooter.”

“And who is your deer?” Boyet asked.

“If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near,” Rosaline said.

She was deliberating mistaking “deer” as “dear” and rejecting Boyet as her dear because, she joked, he was the type of husband she would cuckold and make grow horns.

She then said, “Finely put on, indeed! My insult has found its target!”

Maria said, “You always wrangle and combat verbally with her, Boyet, and she strikes at the brow.”

The brow, aka forehead, is where the horns of the cuckold grow; Rosaline had aimed her comic insult at Boyet’s brow.

“But she herself is hit lower,” Boyet replied. “Have I hit her now?”

A woman’s vagina is a lower target than a cuckold’s brow. For that target to be hit, the head of a penis must enter it the way the head of an arrow must enter the center of a target.

Rosaline replied, “Shall I come upon thee with an old saying that was a man — that was mature — when King Pepin of France, Charlemagne’s father, who died in 768 A.D., was a little boy, as touching the ‘hit it’?”

Pepin the Short (*le Bref*) of France had a sister named Bellysant who was married to Alexander, the Emperor of Greece; she was falsely accused of adultery and gave birth to twin boys: Valentine and Orson.

Boyet answered, "As long as I may answer you with one as old, that was a woman — that was mature — when Queen Guinevere of Britain was a little wench, as touching the 'hit it.'"

Queen Guinevere of Britain was famous for cuckolding her husband, King Arthur, who himself was famous for his Knights of the Round Table.

Rosaline began to sing a popular song:

*"Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,*

*"Thou canst not hit it, my good man."*

In other words, you, Boyet, cannot put your penis in my vagina.

Boyet then sang the next two lines:

*"If I cannot, cannot, cannot,*

*"If I cannot, another can."*

Rosaline then exited.

Costard had enjoyed the verbal joking: "I swear that was most pleasant. How both did fit it!"

Both had fit the song; they had harmonized well together.

Another meaning was that they fit well together, just like a penis in a vagina.

Maria said, "That was a mark marvelously well shot, for they both did hit it."

The mark is a target; the target for many men is a vagina.

Boyet said, "A mark! Oh, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady! Let the mark have a prick in it, to aim at, if it may be."

In archery, the prick is a bull's-eye. In another kind of sport, it is a penis.

"You are wide of the bow hand," Maria said. "Your hand is out."

The bow hand is, usually, the left hand; it is the hand that holds the bow. Maria meant that Boyet had missed the bull's-eye by shooting to the left of it.

Costard said, "Indeed, he must shoot nearer, or he'll never hit the clout."

The clout is a pin fixing a target; here it meant a pin in the center of the bull's-eye. One kind of shooting is ejaculation.

When Maria had said, "Your hand is out," she meant, "You are out of practice."

Boyet took the meaning in another sense in his answer: "Your hand is out" equals "Your hand is out of the vagina."

He said to Maria, "If my hand is out, then it is likely that your hand is in."

In other words, if I am not fingering you, it is probably because you are masturbating.

Costard said, "Then she will get the upshoot by cleaving the pin."

One meaning of “upshoot” is “best shot,” and one meaning of “cleaving” is “splitting.” Costard meant, “Then Maria will get the best shot by shooting the arrow accurately and splitting the pin at the very center of the target.

But “upshoot,” “cleaving,” and “pin” have other meanings. Another meaning of “cleaving” was “holding fast to.”

Using the other meanings, Costard had said this: “Then she will get the man to ejaculate by firmly holding his penis.”

Maria, and the other women in this society, knew these and other double entendres.

She said, “Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul.”

“To talk greasily” is to “talk in a vulgar way.”

Costard said to Boyet, “She’s too hard for you at pricks, sir. Challenge her to bowl instead.”

One meaning was this: “Maria is too hard for you to beat at archery, sir. Challenge her to a game of bowling instead.”

Another interpretation was this: “Maria is making it too hard for you to beat her at the game of pricks — she won’t allow you to use your prick, sir. Challenge her to a game of bowling instead.”

In the game of lawn bowling, the bowl — the ball — sometimes met an obstacle. This was called rubbing. Rubbing was also a word to use to refer to masturbation and sex.

Boyet replied, “I fear too much rubbing. Good night, my good owl — my wise person.”

Boyet and Maria exited.

Alone, Costard said to himself, “By my soul, a swain — a yokel! A most simple clown!”

He was referring to Boyet.

Costard continued, “Lord, Lord, how the ladies and I have put him down! I swear, these were very sweet jests! Most incony and daring vulgar wit! When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it were, it is so fitting.”

Costard then compared Boyet to Armado and Mote; he thought that Boyet had the manners of Armado and the wit of Mote, so on one side Boyet was Armado and on the other side he was Mote — and Costard took pride in helping the French ladies defeat such a man as Boyet.

“Armado, on the other hand — oh, he is a most dainty man! To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan! To see him kiss his hand! And how most sweetly he will swear!

“And his page — Mote — on the other hand, that handful of wit!

“Ah, Heavens, Boyet is a most pathetic little fellow! And I and the ladies have defeated him!”

Hearing the sounds of hunting, Costard cried, “Sola! Sola!”

This was a hunting cry, and he ran off to join the hunting party.

Holofernes the schoolmaster, Sir Nathaniel the curate, and Dull the constable talked together in King Ferdinand's park.

A curate is a member of the clergy; it is proper to call a curate "Sir."

Holofernes is the name of Gargantua's tutor in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais' satiric masterpiece. Rabelais died in 1553.

Referring to the hunting of deer, Sir Nathaniel said, "It is a very reverend and very worthy sport, truly; and it is done in the testimony — with the warrant — of a good conscience."

2 Corinthians 1:12 reads, "*For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly pureness, and not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world, and most of all to youwards*" (1599 Geneva Bible).

Holofernes said about the deer that the Princess had shot, "The deer was, as you know, *sanguis*, in blood; ripe as the pomewater apple, which now hangeth like a jewel in the ear of *caelo*, the sky, the welkin, the Heaven; and anon, soon, falleth like a crab apple on the face of *terra*, the soil, the land, the earth."

As a schoolmaster, Holofernes showed off his knowledge by using many Latin words. For example, *caelo* is, as he said, the sky, and *terra* is, as he said, earth or land. Sometimes, he made a mistake. For example, "in blood" ought to be "*sanguine*" in Latin.

He also used strings of many synonyms in his conversation. For example, "*caelo*, the sky, the welkin, the Heaven."

"Truly, Master Holofernes," Sir Nathaniel said, "the epithets are sweetly varied, like a scholar to say the least, but, sir, I assure ye, it was a buck of the first head."

Holofernes had called the animal the Princess had shot a deer, but Sir Nathaniel was more specific when he called it a buck, especially when he called it a buck of the first head — a male deer that was five years old and had its first set of antlers.

Holofernes replied, "Sir Nathaniel, *haud credo*."

"*Haud credo*" is Latin for "I don't believe it," but Constable Dull misunderstood and thought that Holofernes was saying that the deer was an auld grey doe. "Auld" was a way of saying "old" in Constable Dull's dialect, and so he thought that perhaps "*haud credo*" was Holofernes' way of pronouncing "auld grey doe."

Constable Dull said, "It was not a *haud credo*, aka an auld grey doe; it was a pricket."

A pricket is a two-year-old buck.

"Most barbarous intimation!" Holofernes said. "Yet a kind of insinuation, as it were, *in via*, in a way, of explication; *facere*, to make, as it were, replication, an echo, or rather, *ostentare*, to show, as it were, his inclination, after — that is, according to — his undressed and unfinished, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather, unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed and inexperienced fashion, to insert again my *haud credo* for a deer."

An "intimation" is an "announcement," and an "insinuation" is a "suggestion."

Holofernes was saying that Constable Dull had made a very barbarous announcement that was a suggestion — a suggestion that used Holofernes' own words of *haud credo* — and mistakenly thought that they referred to a particular type of deer.

Constable Dull repeated, "I said the deer was not an auld grey doe; it was a two-year-old buck — it was a pricket."

Holofernes said, "Twice-sod simplicity, *bis coctus!*"

"Twice-sod" meant "twice soaked," and "*bis coctus*" is Latin for "twice cooked."

Holofernes continued, "Oh, thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!"

Sir Nathaniel said, "Sir, he has never fed on the dainties that are bred in a book; he has not eaten paper, as it were; he has not drunk ink: his intellect is not replenished; he is only an animal, only sensible in the duller parts. And such barren plants are set before us, that we thankful should be, which we who of taste and feeling are, for those parts that do fructify — grow fruitful — in us more than in him.

"For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool, so we see a patch set on learning, if we were to see him in a school."

Holofernes believed that he and Sir Nathaniel were much more intelligent than Constable Dull, whom Holofernes considered to be a patch, aka fool. Anyone who saw Constable Dull in a school would, according to Holofernes, know that a fool was being made to attend lessons.

"But *omne bene*, say I — all's well. Being of a wise old father's mind, I say that many can brook — endure — the weather who love not the wind."

In other words, what can't be cured must be endured.

Sir Nathaniel was saying that Holofernes and he could not stop Constable Dull from being a fool, but they could endure him.

Constable Dull wanted to show them that he was intelligent, so he asked them a riddle: "You two are book-men. Can you use your wit and tell me what was a month old when Cain, a son of Adam of Garden of Eden fame, was born, but is not five weeks old as of now?"

Holofernes knew the answer: "Dictynna, goodman Dull; Dictynna, goodman Dull."

Constable Dull asked, "What is Dictynna?"

Sir Nathaniel answered, "A title for Phoebe, for Luna, for the Moon."

This is correct; Dictynna is an obscure title used by the Roman poet Ovid for the Moon-goddess. Dictynna, aka Britomartis, was a Cretan hunter-goddess, and Ovid identified her with the Greek hunter-goddess Artemis, whom the Romans identified with Diana, the Moon-goddess.

Holofernes said, "The Moon was a month old when Adam was no more than a month old, and the Moon did not reach five weeks old when Adam came to the age of five-score: one hundred. The allusion holds in the exchange."

By “allusion” Holofernes meant “riddle.” The exchange was the exchange of the names Cain and Adam — the riddle worked no matter which name you used. In addition, Holofernes was making wordplay on the changes of the Moon.

Constable Dull said, “It is true indeed; the collusion holds in the exchange.”

Dull meant to say “allusion,” but it was true that Sir Nathaniel and Holofernes were colluding together in the exchange of conversation to show that they — in their opinion — were intellectually superior to Constable Dull.

Holofernes said, “God comfort thy capacity! May God strengthen your intelligence and understanding. I say, the allusion holds in the exchange.”

Constable Dull said, “And I say, the pollution holds in the exchange; for the Moon is never but a month old, and I say besides that, it was a two-year-old buck — a pricket — that the Princess killed.”

Again, Dull meant to say “allusion,” but “pollution” was an apt word to describe the language of Sir Nathaniel and Holofernes. Certainly, such language was conducive to showing off, but it was not conducive to good communication or good conversation.

Holofernes said, “Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal and spontaneous epitaph on the death of the deer? And, to humor the ignorant, I will call the deer that the Princess killed a pricket.”

Sir Nathaniel replied, “*Perge*, good Master Holofernes, *perge* — provided that it shall please you to abrogate scurrility.”

*Perge* is Latin for “proceed.” “To abrogate scurrility” meant “to avoid scandalous language” — Sir Nathaniel was worried about the word “pricket.”

Holofernes said, “I will somewhat affect the letter — achieve alliteration — for it argues facility with language.”

He paused and then said, “The preyful Princess pierced and pricked a pretty pleasing pricket.”

“Preyful” meant “killing much prey.”

Holofernes continued, “Some say a sore; but not a sore, until now made sore with shooting.”

A sore is a four-year-old buck. Holofernes was saying that the buck was not a sore until it became sore after being shot with the Princess’ arrow.

Holofernes continued, “The dogs did yell. Add ‘L’ to ‘sore,’ and then sorel jumps from thicket.”

A sorel is a three-year-old buck.

Holofernes continued, “Either it was a pricket sore, or else a sorel; in either case the people fall a-hooting. If sore be sore, then adding ‘L’ to ‘sore’ makes fifty sores of sore L.”

“L” is the Roman symbol for “50.”

Holofernes continued, “From one sore I a hundred make by adding but one more L. Sore L plus L equals a hundred sores.”

Sir Nathaniel was impressed: “That is a rare talent!”

Constable Dull was unimpressed: “If a talent is a claw, look how he claws him with a talent.”

For one meaning of “talent,” Dull had in mind “talon.” Holofernes was impressing Sir Nathaniel with a talent for bad word play and a talent for creating bad extemporaneous alliterative poetry; it was as if Holofernes’ ‘talent’ was a talon clawing Sir Nathaniel.

Holofernes said, “This is a gift that I have — it is simple, simple, and it is a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions and suggestions, revolutions and reflections. These are begot in the ventricle — the hollow depths — of memory, nourished in the womb of the *pia mater*, which is a protective membrane covering the brain, and are delivered, aka given birth to, upon the mellowing of occasion and opportunity. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.”

Sir Nathaniel said, “Sir, I praise the Lord for you; and so may my parishioners; for their sons are well tutored by you, and their daughters profit very greatly under you. You are a good member of the commonwealth.”

Sir Nathaniel, who had been worried about the word “pricket,” had just made — unaware — some mistakes of the type he feared. One meaning of “their daughters profit very greatly under you” was “their daughters increase in size — grow pregnant — under you.” The word “member” also had a second, sexual meaning.

Holofernes replied, “By Hercules, if their sons be ingenuous and intelligent, they shall want no instruction; if their daughters be capable, I will put it to them.”

Again, the passage about daughters had a second, sexual meaning. “Capable” meant “mature,” and it also meant “capable of having sex.” The phrase “put it to them” also had a second, sexual meaning.

Holofernes then looked up and said, “But *vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*; a soul feminine saluteth us.”

“*Vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*” is Latin for “A man is wise who speaks few words.”

The “soul feminine” was Jaquenetta, who walked over to Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel. She was accompanied by Costard.

Jaquenetta said to Sir Nathaniel, “May God give you a good morning, master Person.”

“Person” was her pronunciation of “Parson.”

Holofernes said, “Master Person, *quasi* pierce-one?”

“*Quasi*” is Latin for “as if” or “as if it were.”

Holofernes continued, “If one should be pierced, which is the one?”

Costard answered, “Indeed, master schoolmaster, he who is most like a hogshead.”

A hogshead is a barrel. A barrel of wine is tapped — pierced — in order to get the wine out of the barrel.

“Piercing a hogshead!” Holofernes said. “That is a good luster of conceit in a tuft of earth.”

“A good luster of conceit” is “a good spark of imagination,” and “a tuft of earth” is a “clod.” Holofernes regarded Costard as a clod, but he enjoyed Costard’s joke.

Holofernes said about the joke, “It is fire enough for a flint, and pearl enough for a swine. It is pretty; it is well.”

He was thinking of two proverbs: “In the coldest flint there is hot fire” and “Cast not pearls before swine.”

This time using the correct pronunciation of “Parson,” Jaquenetta said, “Good master Parson, be so good as to read this letter to me. It was given to me by Costard, and sent to me from Don Armado. I beseech you, read it.”

She gave the letter to Sir Nathaniel, who began to read it.

Holofernes had heard Jaquenetta say, “I beseech you,” meaning, “Please.” He now launched into a quotation using the Latin word “*precor*,” which means “I beseech” or “I ask.”

He said, “‘*Facile precor gelida quando peccas omnia sub umbra ruminat*’ — and so forth.”

The Latin means, more or less, “Easily, I pray, since you are making a mess of everything in the cool shade. It ruminates [...]”

The Latin quotation is inaccurate. The correct quotation is this: “*Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra ruminat.*”

The Latin means, “Faustus, since your whole flock is ruminating in the cool shade, I pray [...]”

The Latin quotation is the first few words of the first poem in the *Eclogues*, published in 1498. Johannes Baptista Spagnolo of Mantua, who was known as the Mantuan, wrote the highly regarded *Eclogues*.

Holofernes continued, “Ah, good old Mantuan! I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice: *Venetia, Venetia, chi non ti vede non ti pretia.*”

The Italian words mean, “Venice, Venice, he who does not see you does not value you.”

In other words, anyone who sees Venice loves Venice.

Holofernes continued, “Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! Who understandeth thee not, loves thee not.”

He began to sing a musical scale of notes: “*Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa.*”

Later, “do” replaced “ut.”

Holofernes had sung the scale of notes in the wrong order. This is the right order: *ut (do), re, mi, fa, sol, la.*

He then asked Sir Nathaniel, “Under pardon, sir, what are the contents of the letter? Or rather, as Horace says in his —”

While talking, he glanced at the letter, and surprised by what he saw, he said, “— what, on my soul, verses?”

Sir Nathaniel replied, "Aye, sir, and the verses are very learned."

Holofernes requested, "Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; *lege, domine.*"

"*Lege, domine*" is Latin for "Read, sir."

Sir Nathaniel read the verses, which formed a sonnet:

*"If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?"*

The sonnet, of course, was written by Biron, who wanted Rosaline to read it. This line means, "If falling in love makes me break my oath not to fall in love, how then can I swear an oath that I am in love?"

*"Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd!*

*"Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove.*

*"Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bowed."*

In other words, when I swore my oath, I thought that it would stand as firmly as an oak and not bow before anything, but when I saw you the words of my oath became flexible like willow branches and bowed before you.

Osiers are willows.

*"Study his bias leaves and makes his book thine eyes,"*

In other words, seeing you, the student sets aside his favorite subject to study and instead studies your eyes.

*"Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend.*

*"If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;*

*"Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend,*

*"All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;*

*"Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire."*

Biron meant that he deserved some praise for being intelligent enough to admire the personal characteristics of Rosaline.

*"Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,"*

Jove is Jupiter, King of the gods.

*"Which not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire."*

"Not to anger bent" meant "not angry."

*"Celestial as thou art, oh, pardon, love, this wrong,*

*"That sings Heaven's praise with such an Earthly tongue."*

Holofernes complained about Sir Nathaniel's reading, "You find not the *apostrophas*, and so miss the accent."

The apostrophe is used to indicate a missing vowel, and so it is used in contractions and to show other elisions — two syllables become one syllable when they are elided. If poetry contains elisions, and the elisions are not properly pronounced, words can be accented incorrectly and the meter thrown off.

But did Holofernes know what he was saying? Biron's sonnet contains one contraction — *vow'd* — of a word that is sometimes pronounced as two syllables in poetry. Were any other elisions needed?

Holofernes said, "Let me supervise the *canzonet*."

In other words, let me look over the little poem.

He continued, "Here are only numbers ratified; but, as for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, *caret*."

"Numbers ratified" are "verses that are metrically correct" — the verses have the correct stresses and number of syllables.

"*Caret*" is Latin for "it is lacking."

Holofernes continued with praise for Ovid, author of the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's family name is "Naso," which means "nose."

He said, "Ovidius Naso was the man, and why, indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention?"

The "jerks of invention" are "flashes of inspiration." Holofernes was praising Ovid for his inspiration, and he went on to accuse Biron of being a mere imitator — someone who followed someone else.

The Latin word "*imitari*" means "to imitate."

Holofernes said, "*Imitari* is nothing: so doth the hound his master, the ape his keeper, the tired horse his rider."

To imitate someone is to be led by his example. The dog and the ape can be led by leashes tied to their necks, and a tired horse can be led by the reins. The dog, the ape, and the tired horse follow whichever man leads them by the leash or the rein.

He then said to Jaquenetta, "But, *damosella* virgin, was this directed to you?"

"*Damosella*" means "damsel" or "maiden." It is Medieval Latin.

Jaquenetta replied, "Aye, sir, from one Monsieur Biron, one of the strange Queen's lords."

The word "strange" meant "foreign."

Previously, Jaquenetta had said that Armado had sent the poem to her. Perhaps she realized that Armado was incapable of writing in this style, and perhaps she had learned from Costard that Biron had written a letter and asked him to deliver it. Of course, she was wrong when she said that Biron was one of the strange Queen's — ahem, Princess' — lords; Biron was one of the King's lords.

Holofernes said, "I will overglance the superscript."

This meant, “I will look at to whom this is addressed.”

He read out loud, “*To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline.*”

Rosaline was dark-skinned; “snow-white” was a conventional compliment in a society that valued light skin.

Holofernes then said, “I will look again on the intellect of the letter, for the nomination of the party writing to the person written unto.”

The intellect of the letter was the person writing the letter — that person had used his intellect to write the letter. Holofernes wanted to find out that person’s “nomination,” which Holofernes misused for “name.” “Nomination,” however, does have a Latin root that means “name”: *nomine*.

He read out loud, “*Your ladyship’s in all desired employment, BIRON.*”

Biron was offering to do whatever Rosaline wanted him to do: “all desired employment.”

Holofernes said, “Sir Nathaniel, this Biron is one of the votaries with the King; and here he has framed a letter to a sequent of the stranger Queen’s, which accidentally, or by the way of progression, has miscarried.”

A “sequent” is a “follower.”

Holofernes was saying that the letter had been delivered to the wrong person, either accidentally or because of the route it had traveled.

He then said to Jaquenetta, “Trip and go, my sweet. Deliver this paper into the royal hand of the King: it may concern much and be important. Stay not thy compliment; I forgive thy duty; adieu.”

Holofernes wanted Jaquenetta to hurry; she need not curtsy to him and take a formal leave-taking.

Jaquenetta said, “Good Costard, go with me.”

She then said, “Sir, may God save your life!”

“Have with thee, my girl,” Costard said. “I will go with you.”

Costard and Jaquenetta exited.

Complimenting Holofernes on his decision to have Jaquenetta deliver the letter to King Ferdinand, Sir Nathaniel said, “Sir, you have done this in the fear of God, very religiously; and, as a certain Father saith —”

The Father was a Father of the Church.

Holofernes interrupted, “— tell me not of the father; I do fear colorable colors.”

In the proverb “I fear no colors,” the word “colors” means “battle flags.” A now rare definition of “colorable” is “fraudulent.” Therefore, “colorable colors” could mean “fraudulent battle flags.” Apparently, Holofernes wanted to avoid religious disputation. Discussing religion can lead to battles, both metaphoric and physical. Holofernes may also have been thinking that the

father was a Catholic priest. He wanted to avoid any disputes between Catholic and Protestant theology. Catholics could say that Protestants fought under a fraudulent battle flag, and vice versa.

Holofernes then said, “But to return to the verses: Did they please you, Sir Nathaniel?”

Sir Nathaniel replied, “I liked them marvelously well for the penmanship.”

Holofernes said, “I dine today at the home of the father of a certain pupil of mine; where, if, before repast, it shall please you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid child or pupil, undertake your *ben venuto*; where I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savoring of poetry, wit, nor invention. I beseech your society.”

“*Ben venuto*” is Italian for “welcome.”

Sir Nathaniel said, “And I thank you, too; for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life.”

Holofernes said, “And, *certes*, the text most infallibly concludes it.”

“*Certes*” is French for “certainly.”

Holofernes then said to Constable Dull, “Sir, I do invite you, too. You shall not say me nay: *pauca verba*.”

“*Pauca verba*” is Latin for “few words.” A proverb stated, “Few words are best.”

Holofernes continued, “Away! Let’s go! The gentlefolk are at their game, and we will go to our own recreation.”

### — 4.3 —

Biron stood alone, holding a paper, in King Ferdinand’s park.

He said these things to himself:

“The King is hunting the deer; I am coursing — pursuing and hunting — myself.”

A husband and wife become one. Biron, who was not married, was seeking his other, better half.

Biron continued to speak to himself: “They have pitched a toil, a net into which the game will be driven so that it can be shot; I am toiling in a pitch — I am trying to get out of the mess I am in.”

He was thinking of Rosaline’s pitch-black eyes — eyes that had captured him in a net of love and had caused him to break his oath to stay away from women. Literally, pitch is boiled-down tar, a deep-black substance.

Biron continued to speak to himself: “This is pitch that defiles.”

He was thinking of this proverb: “He that touches pitch shall be defiled.”

The proverb was derived from Ecclesiasticus 13:1, which is part of the Apocrypha: “*He that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled therewith, and hee that hath fellowship with a proude man, shall be like vnto him*” (1611 King James Version).

Biron continued to speak to himself: "Defile! A foul word.

"Well, set yourself down, sorrow, and stay awhile! In other words, I must have patience. For so they say the fool said, and so say I, and therefore I am also a fool. Well proven, wit! I am definitely a fool; my thoughts prove it!

"By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: This love kills sheep. It kills me, and therefore I am a sheep. Well proven again on my side! My wit gets much credit for correct reasoning!"

During the Trojan War, Achilles, the greatest Greek warrior, was killed. Afterwards, his armor was awarded to one of the living Greeks. According to Quintus of Smyrna's epic poem *Posthomerica*, the armor was awarded to the Greek warrior who had done the most to recover the corpse of Achilles. Two warriors — Great Ajax and Odysseus — had done the most to recover Achilles' corpse, and so a vote was taken to determine which of the two would get the armor. Achilles' armor was awarded to Odysseus, and this hurt Great Ajax so much that he went insane. According to Sophocles' tragedy *Ajax*, Great Ajax slaughtered sheep, thinking that they were Odysseus and Agamemnon, the main leader of the Greeks against the Trojans.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "I will not love. If I do, hang me; truly and faithfully, I will not love.

"Oh, but her eye — by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes."

Biron had mentioned one eye, and then he had mentioned Rosaline's two eyes. The one eye could be her vagina.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and I lie in my throat."

"To lie in one's throat" is to be an outrageous liar.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "By Heaven, I do love, and it has taught me to rhyme as I write sonnets, and to be melancholy. Here in my hand is part of my rhyme, and here is my melancholy."

He was referring to the paper he was holding in his hands; on it he had written a sonnet.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "Well, she has one of my sonnets already. The clown — Costard — bore it, the fool — me — sent it, and the lady — Rosaline — has it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady!

"By the world, I would not care a pin, if the other three were in the same situation I am in."

In other words, Biron would not mind if King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain were also in love.

Biron looked up, saw someone coming, and said to himself, "Here comes someone holding a piece of paper. May God give him grace to groan because he is in love!"

Biron climbed a tree.

King Ferdinand walked under the tree and said, "Ay me!"

"Ay me" is an expression indicating sorrow.

Biron said to himself, "Shot by immortal Cupid and in love, by Heaven! Proceed, sweet Cupid. You have thumped him with your bird-bolt under the left pap and in his heart. Truly, I will hear secrets!"

A bird-bolt is a blunt arrow used by mortals to shoot birds.

King Ferdinand read out loud the sonnet he had written:

*"So sweet a kiss the golden Sun gives not*

*"To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,*

*"As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote*

*"The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows:"*

The "night of dew" refers to the tears that the lovesick King Ferdinand sheds at night.

*"Nor shines the silver Moon one half so bright*

*"Through the transparent bosom of the deep,"*

The "deep" is the "night."

*"As doth thy face through tears of mine give light;*

*"Thou shinest in every tear that I do weep:"*

By "Thou shinest," King Ferdinand meant "Your reflection shines."

*"No drop but as a coach doth carry thee;*

*"So ridest thou triumphing in my woe."*

In the above two lines, King Ferdinand compared the Princess of France to a woman who had conquered him and now was riding a coach — a chariot — in a Roman triumphal procession.

*"Do but behold the tears that swell in me,*

*"And they thy glory through my grief will show:*

*"But do not love thyself; then thou wilt keep*

*"My tears for glasses, and still make me weep."*

The "glasses" are looking-glasses, aka mirrors.

*"Oh, Queen of Queens! How far dost thou excel,*

*"No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell."*

King Ferdinand then said to himself, "How shall she know my griefs? I'll drop this paper somewhere she can find it."

He saw someone coming and said, "Sweet leaves, shade — hide — my folly. Who is he who comes here?"

He hid behind the tree and said, "What, Longaville! And he is reading! Listen, my ears."

Biron said to himself, "Now, in your likeness, one more fool appears!"

Longaville, carrying pieces of paper stuck in his hat, said to himself, "Ay me, I am forsworn! I have broken my oath!"

Biron said, "Why, he comes in like a perjurer, wearing papers."

In this society, people who had perjured themselves were forced to display a sign on themselves that stated their offense.

King Ferdinand said to himself, "He is in love like me, I hope. We have a sweet fellowship in shame!"

Biron said to himself, "One drunkard loves another of the name."

Longaville asked himself, "Am I the first who has perjured himself so?"

Biron said, "I could give you comfort. Not by just two whom I know, for there is a third. You make up the triumvirate, the corner-cap of society, the shape of Love's Tyburn that hangs up simplicity and foolishness."

Biron had mentioned things that formed a three. A triumvirate is a political group composed of three men. A corner-cap is a cap that has three sides. At the village of Tyburn was a gallows made of three wooden beams.

Longaville said to himself, "I fear these stubborn lines lack the power to move my beloved emotionally."

He read out loud, "*Oh, sweet Maria, empress of my love!*"

Then he said to himself, "These verses I will tear up, and write in prose."

He tore up the sonnet.

Biron said to himself, "Oh, rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid's hose. Disfigure not his shop."

In this society, the hose — tights or trousers — that men wore contained a codpiece that covered and accentuated the genitals; often codpieces were highly decorated. "Guards" are "ornamental trimmings." "Cupid's shop" is where he does his work — the genitals.

Longaville looked at another piece of paper and said, "This poem shall go to my beloved."

He read his sonnet out loud:

*"Did not the Heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,*

*"'Gainst which the world cannot hold argument,*

*"Persuade my heart to this false perjury?*

*"Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.*

*"A woman I forswore; but I will prove,"*

By “forsook,” Longaville meant “renounced.” By “prove,” Longaville meant “establish to be true.”

*“Thou being a goddess, I forsook not thee:*

*“My vow was Earthly, thou a Heavenly love;*

*“Thy grace being gained cures all disgrace in me.*

*“Vows are but breath, and breath a vapor is:”*

A proverb stated, “Words are but wind.”

*“Then thou, fair Sun, which on my Earth dost shine,*

*“Exhalest this vapor-vow; in thee it is:”*

By “exhalest,” Longaville meant “draw up” or “evaporate.”

*“If broken then, it is no fault of mine:*

*“If by me broke, what fool is not so wise*

*“To lose an oath to win a paradise?”*

Biron said to himself, “This is the lover-vein, which makes flesh a deity, and which makes a green goose — an immature girl — a goddess: It is pure, pure idolatry. God amend us, God amend us! We are much out of the way. May God help us! We lovers are far gone.”

Longaville asked himself, “By whom shall I send this sonnet to Maria?”

He looked up, saw someone coming, and said to himself, “Company! Wait!”

He hid himself.

Biron said to himself, “All hid, all hid — just like in the old game Hide-and-Seek that is played by children. Like a demigod here sit I in the sky, and wretched fools’ secrets heedfully overeye.”

Seeing Dumain arriving and carrying a piece of paper, he added, “More sacks to the mill! Oh, Heavens, I have my wish! All of us are in love! Dumain is transformed into a lover! We are four woodcocks in the same dish!”

Woodcocks are proverbially stupid birds.

Dumain said to himself, “Oh, most divine Kate!”

Biron, whose opinion of Katherine was different, said to himself, “Oh, most profane coxcomb!”

A coxcomb was a hat worn by a professional jester; it resembled the comb of a cock, aka rooster. In other words, Biron was saying that she had the head of a fool.

Dumain said to himself, “By Heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!”

Biron said to himself, “By Earth, she is not a wonder. Corporal — there you lie.”

Dumain was a Corporal in the army of Love.

Dumain said to himself, "Her amber hair for foul has amber quoted."

He meant that the amber of Katherine's hair makes real amber seem ugly. People see her amber hair and declare that real amber is ugly.

Actually, Dumain's words were ambiguous. They could also be interpreted as saying this: Real amber makes the amber of Katherine's hair seem ugly. People see real amber and declare that Katherine's amber hair is ugly.

Biron said to himself, "An amber-colored raven was well noted."

In other words, it would be notable to find an amber-colored raven. By saying this, Biron was also comparing Katherine to a raven; in other words, she was ugly. The raven was regarded as a foul fowl.

Dumain said to himself, "She is as upright as the cedar."

Biron said to himself, "Stoop, I say; get your head out of the clouds. She has a rounded shoulder — it looks as if her shoulder is pregnant with a child."

Dumain said to himself, "She is as fair as day."

Biron said to himself, "Yes, she is as fair as some days — the days during which the Sun doesn't shine."

Dumain said to himself, "Oh, that I had my wish!"

Longaville said to himself, "And that I had mine!"

King Ferdinand said to himself, "And I mine, too, good Lord!"

Biron said to himself, "Amen, as long as I had mine. Isn't 'mine' a good word?"

Dumain said to himself, "I would forget her, but like a fever she reigns in my blood and she will be remembered."

Biron said to himself, "A fever in your blood! Why, then incision would let her out in saucers. Sweet misprision! Sweet deficient comparison!"

In this society, fevers were often treated by bloodletting. A shallow incision was made so the patient would bleed, and the blood was collected in saucers.

Dumain said to himself, "Once more I'll read the ode that I have written."

Biron said to himself, "Once more I'll mark how love can vary wit — how love can change an intelligent man's thinking and cause him to express that love in different ways."

Dumain read his poem out loud:

*"On a day — alack the day! —*

*"Love, whose month is ever May,*

*"Spied a blossom passing fair"*

The word “passing” meant “surpassingly.”

*“Playing in the wanton air:*

*“Through the velvet leaves the wind,*

*“All unseen, can passage find;”*

The word “can” — an archaic verb — meant “did.”

*“That the lover, sick to death,”*

The word “That” meant “So that.”

*“Wished himself the Heaven’s breath.*

*“‘Air,’ quoth he, ‘thy cheeks may blow;*

*“‘Air,’ quoth he, ‘thy cheeks may blow;*

*“‘Air, would I might triumph so!*

*“‘But, alack, my hand is sworn*

*“‘Never to pluck thee from thy thorn;*

*“‘Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,””*

The word “unmeet” meant “unsuitable” and “improper.”

*“‘Youth so apt to pluck a sweet!*

*“‘Do not call it sin in me,*

*“‘That I am forsworn for thee;*

*“‘Thou for whom Jove would swear*

*“‘Juno but an Ethiopie were;*

*“‘And deny himself for Jove,*

*“‘Turning mortal for thy love.’”*

*“‘Turning mortal for thy love.’”*

The last four lines stated that Jove, aka Jupiter, King of the gods, would, for love of Katherine, say that his wife, Juno, was as ugly as an Ethiopian — most people in this society thought that Ethiopians were ugly because most people in this society valued light hair and light skin. Jove would also give up his immortality and his position as King of the gods so that he could be with Katherine.

Dumain said to himself, “This poem I will send to Katherine, and something else more plain that shall express my true love’s fasting pain. My love is fasting because it is unrequited.

“Oh, I wish that the King, Biron, and Longaville were lovers, too, like me! Ill, to example ill, would from my forehead wipe a perjured note; for none offend where all alike do dote.”

In other words, one lovesick man, to help another lovesick man, would from his forehead wipe away a mark of perjury. One way to do this would be for all men who had sworn not to love to break their vows by loving. When everyone breaks a vow, no one points out that someone has broken the vow.

In this society, people who had perjured themselves were forced to display a sign on themselves that stated their offense. Dumain was referring to that kind of sign.

In addition, he was referring to a love sonnet that a lovesick man such as himself or Longaville could stick in his hat. The love sonnet expressed a true love, but it was a perjured note because its existence showed that the author had broken a vow not to pursue a woman.

In addition, in Dante's *Purgatory*, an angel marks seven P's on the foreheads of saved sinners beginning to climb the Mountain of Purgatory in order to purge themselves of the seven deadly sins. As each of the seven levels of the mountain is climbed, one of the seven deadly sins is purged and an angel uses a wing to remove one of the P's from the sinner's forehead.

When Dumain said that "for none offend where all alike do dote," he meant that if each of the four men — himself, King Ferdinand, Biron, and Longaville — committed perjury by breaking their oath, none of them would blame the others because they had all broken the same oath. This is true — once every man's lovesickness has been revealed.

Longaville came out of hiding and said, "Dumain, your love is far from Christian charity. You may look pale, but I also would blush, I know, if I were overheard and taken napping so."

King Ferdinand came out of hiding and said to Longaville, "Come, sir, you blush. As his is, your case is also such. You chide him, although you offend twice as much.

"You do not love Maria? Longaville did never a sonnet for her sake write, nor ever lay his wreathed, folded arms athwart his loving bosom to keep down his heart?"

The heart of a lovesick or otherwise emotionally excited man can beat rapidly. In this society, people would thump their chest to keep their heart from beating so rapidly. In this case, Longaville could simply fold his arms over his chest — a position a lover often takes — and that would keep his heart from beating so rapidly.

King Ferdinand continued, "I have been closely shrouded in this bush and watched you both and saw that you both blushed. I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion of acting, saw sighs exude from you, and noted well your passion: 'Ay me!' says one. 'Oh, Jove!' the other cries.

"One says her hairs are gold; the other says crystal are the other beloved's eyes.

"You, Longaville, would for paradise break faith, and your oath.

"And Dumain, if you were Jove, for your love you would infringe an oath.

"What will Biron say when he shall hear that your oath and faith are so infringed, which with such zeal you did swear? How he will scorn! How he will expend his wit! How he will triumph, leap with glee, and laugh at it!

"For all the wealth that ever I did see, I would not have him know so much about me."

Biron said to himself, "Now I will step forth and whip hypocrisy."

He climbed out of the tree and said, “Ah, my good liege, I pray that you pardon me! Good heart, what grace have you, thus to reprove these worms for loving, when you are the most in love?”

“Your eyes make no coaches? In your tears there is no certain Princess who appears? You’ll not be perjured because it is a hateful thing?”

“Tush, you say, none but minstrels like the act of sonneting!”

“But aren’t you ashamed? Aren’t you, all three of you, ashamed to be thus much overshot? All of you said an oath and made study your target, but all of you missed that target.”

“Longaville found Dumain’s mote, the King did Longaville’s mote see, but I a beam do find in the eye of each of you three.”

A mote is a speck.

Biron was referring to Matthew 7:3: “*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*” (King James Bible).

Biron continued, “Oh, what a scene of foolery have I seen, of sighs, of groans, of sorrow, and of woeful teen! Oh, me, with what strict patience have I sat, to see a King transformed to a gnat! To see great Hercules whipping a gig, and profound Solomon tune a jig, and Nestor play at push-pin with the boys, and critic Timon laugh at idle toys and useless trivialities!”

Children sometimes played a game with a spinning top, aka gig. They would start it spinning, and then hit it with a whip to keep it spinning. To “tune a jig” is to sing or play a song. Push-pin was a game in which children tried to get pins into the other child’s territory. Timon was a famous misanthrope whom William Shakespeare wrote about in his tragedy *Timon of Athens*.

Biron continued, “Where lies your grief, oh, tell me, good Dumain?”

“And gentle Longaville, where lies your pain?”

“And where lies my liege’s?”

“Your pains lie all about the breast. Someone bring a caudle, ho! Someone bring a medicinal drink!”

King Ferdinand said, “Too bitter is your jesting. Are we betrayed — exposed — thus to your over-view?”

“You are not betrayed by me, for I am betrayed by you,” Biron said. “I, who am honest and who holds it to be a sin to break the vow that I am engaged in, am betrayed by keeping company with men like you — men of inconstancy.”

“When shall you see me write a thing in rhyme? Or groan for Joan? Or spend a minute’s time in preening myself? When shall you hear that I will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye, a walking gait, a posture, a brow, a breast, a waist, a leg, a limb?”

Biron, seeing Jaquenetta and Costard walking towards them, started to hurry away. He had given Costard a sonnet to give to Rosaline, and he feared that he would be first exposed as a lover and then exposed to ridicule.

“Wait!” King Ferdinand said. “Why are you hurrying away so fast? Is he a true man or a thief who gallops so?”

“I run posthaste away from love,” Biron said. “Good lover, let me go.”

Jaquenetta and Costard walked over to the men.

Jaquenetta said, “God bless the King!”

Seeing the letter Jaquenetta was holding, King Ferdinand asked, “What present have you there?”

Costard replied, “Some certain treason.”

King Ferdinand asked, “What is treason making — doing — here?”

Costard said, “Treason makes nothing, sir.”

King Ferdinand said, “If it mars nothing either, then the treason and you two may go away in peace together.”

“I beseech your grace, let this letter be read,” Jaquenetta said to the King as she handed him the letter. “Our person suspects it; it is treason, he said.”

As she had done previously, Jaquenetta pronounced “parson” as “person.” She was also mistaken about the person who suspected the letter; that person was the schoolmaster Holofernes, not the parson Sir Nathaniel. In addition, nothing at the time had been said about treason.

Handing Biron the letter, King Ferdinand said, “Biron, read it over.”

He then asked Jaquenetta, “Where did you get the letter?”

“From Costard.”

King Ferdinand asked Costard, “Where did you get it?”

“From Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio.”

Of course, he meant Don Armado.

Biron recognized his own handwriting, and he tore up the letter.

“What are you doing?” King Ferdinand asked. “What is the matter with you? Why did you tear up the letter?”

Biron replied, “It is a trifling thing like a toy, my liege, just a toy. Your grace needs not fear it.”

Longaville said, “It caused Biron to feel strong emotion, and therefore let’s hear it.”

Dumain gathered up the pieces from the ground, looked at them, and said, “This is Biron’s handwriting, and here is his name.”

Biron said to Costard, “Ah, you useless blockhead! You were born to do me shame.”

He then said to King Ferdinand, “I am guilty, my lord, guilty! I confess, I confess.”

“You confess what?” King Ferdinand asked.

“I confess that you three fools lacked me — a fourth fool — to make up the mess of four who dine together at a table. He, he, and you — that’s you, my liege — and I are pick-purses in love, we are trying to steal love, and we deserve to die.”

In this society, the usual punishment for pick-purses — that is, pickpockets — was death by hanging.

Biron continued, “Oh, dismiss this audience, and I shall tell you more.”

“Now the number is even,” Dumain said.

The goose — Biron — made the number even. He was the *l’envoi*.

“True, true; we are four,” Biron said. “Will these turtledoves — these lovers, Jaquenetta and Costard — be gone?”

King Ferdinand said to Jaquenetta and Costard. “Hence, sirs; away!”

In this society, the word “sir” could be used to refer to a woman.

Costard said, “The true — loyal — folk now walk away, and they let the traitors stay.”

Costard and Jaquenetta walked away.

Biron said, “Sweet lords, sweet lovers — oh, let us embrace! We are as true — steadfast — as flesh and blood can be. We are true to our youth and the reason we were born. The sea will ebb and flow, Heaven will show its face; young blood does not obey an old decree, and we cannot cross, aka oppose, the cause, aka reason, why we were born.”

Young hot-blooded men do not obey an old decree. Even if they swear an oath to take up study and give up women, they are unable to keep that oath.

Young hot-blooded men also cannot oppose the reason why they were born — they cannot oppose their lustful feelings. We are born to have children and perpetuate the human species.

Biron continued, “Therefore, all of us must be forsworn. All of must break our oath.”

King Ferdinand asked, “Did these torn-up lines of writing reveal some love of yours?”

“Did they, ask you?” Biron replied. “Whoever sees the Heavenly Rosaline will act like an uncivilized and savage Sun-worshipping man of India, seeing the first dawning of the gorgeous east. Both will bow their vassal head and, having been struck blind, either by the Sun or by the beauty of Rosaline, both will touch the base ground with obedient breast.

“What peremptory eagle-sighted eye that dares look upon the Heaven of Rosaline’s brow will not be blinded by her majesty?”

Eagles were reputed to be able to stare at the Sun without harming their eyes, but according to Biron, the beauty of Rosaline would blind even a person with eyes like those of an eagle.

King Ferdinand said, “What zeal, what fury, has inspired you now? My love, the Princess, who is Rosaline’s superior, is a gracious Moon. Compared to my love, Rosaline is an attending star, a scarcely seen light.”

Biron replied, “My eyes are then no eyes, nor am I Biron. Oh, but for my love, day would turn to night! Of all complexions the culled sovereignty — the excellence selected as the highest — meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek, where several worthy beauties make one perfect beauty, where nothing is missing that the desire for perfection itself does seek.

“Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues, the embellishment of all civilized languages — bah, that is painted, artificial, cosmetic rhetoric! Oh, Rosalind does not need it. To things for sale a seller’s praise belongs; sellers praise what they have for sale, hoping that someone will buy from them. Rosaline surpasses praise, and therefore praise is inadequate to do her beauty justice and so praise becomes a blot and a blemish.

“A withered hermit, five-score winters worn, might shake off fifty of his hundred years, looking her in the eye. Looking at a beautiful woman varnishes and renews an aged man, making him as if he were newly born, and to the old man with the crutch it gives the infancy of a babe in the cradle.

“Oh, beauty is the Sun that makes all things shine.”

King Ferdinand said, “By Heaven, your love is as black as ebony.”

Biron said, “Is ebony like her? Oh, wood and word divine! A wife made of such wood would be felicity itself.

“Oh, who can help me to give an oath? Where is a Holy Bible so that I may swear beauty does beauty lack, if beauty does not learn from looking at Rosaline’s face how beauty should look. No face is fair that is not fully as black as the face of Rosaline.”

Biron was not only saying that black is beautiful; he was also saying that only black is beautiful.

“Oh, that is a paradox!” King Ferdinand said. “Black is the badge — the distinguishing sign — of Hell; it is the hue of dungeons and the suit of night. Beauty’s true badge, which is lightness, becomes the Heavens well.”

Biron replied, “Devils soonest tempt when they resemble spirits of light.”

He was thinking of II Corinthians 11:14: “*And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Biron continued, “Oh, if in black my lady’s forehead is decked, that black mourns that cosmetics and wigs should ravish doters with a false appearance, and therefore Rosaline was born to make black fair.

“Rosaline’s appearance changes the fashion of these days, for native blood — rosiness — is thought to be devalued like cosmetics now, and therefore a woman with a naturally pink complexion who wants to avoid dispraise, uses cosmetics to make herself black in order to imitate Rosaline’s black forehead.”

Dumain said, “To look like Rosaline, chimney-sweepers make themselves black.”

Longaville said, “And since Rosaline’s beauty became fashionable, colliers are accounted bright.”

A collier is a dealer in charcoal or pit-coal.

King Ferdinand said, “And Ethiopians boast about their sweet complexion.”

Dumain said, “Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.”

Biron said, “Your lady friends never dare to come in contact with rain, for fear their colors — which are due to cosmetics — would be washed away.”

King Ferdinand said, “It would be good, if yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain, I’ll find a fairer face that has not washed today.”

Biron replied, “I’ll prove that Rosaline is fair, aka beautiful, or I’ll talk until doomsday here.”

King Ferdinand said, “No devil will frighten you then so much as she.”

Dumain said, “I never before knew a man to hold such vile stuff so dear.”

Longaville raised one of his feet, on which were black shoes, and said, “Look, here’s your love. Look at my foot and see her face.”

Biron said, “Oh, if the streets were paved with your eyes, her feet would be much too dainty for such a path to tread!”

“Oh, vile!” Dumain said, “Then, as she walks, what upward lies the street would see as she walked overhead. The street, if it had my eyes, would be able to look up her skirt.”

“But what about all this?” King Ferdinand said. “Aren’t we all in love?”

“Nothing is as sure as that we are all in love,” Biron said, “and thereby we are all forsworn. All of us have broken our oath.”

“Then let us stop this chattering,” King Ferdinand said, “and, good Biron, now prove that our loving is lawful, and that our faith is not torn. Make a reasonable argument that our falling in love is allowed and that we have not actually broken our oath.”

“Yes, indeed, do that!” Dumain said. “We need some clever trickery with words to show that we have not done this evil of perjury.”

“Oh, we need some authority, some precedent, on how to proceed,” Longaville said. “We need some tricks, some subtle distinctions, that will teach us how to cheat the devil.”

“We need some salve for perjury,” Dumain said.

Biron rose to the occasion.

“It is more than necessary,” he said. “Here goes, then, affection’s men at arms. All of us are now warriors in Love’s army.

“Consider what you first did swear to do: to fast, to study, and to see no women. That is flat treason against the Kingly status of youth.

“Say, can you fast? Your stomachs are too young and inexperienced, and abstinence engenders maladies. Not eating causes illness.

“Oh, we have made a vow to study, lords, and in that vow we have forsworn our books. For when would you, my liege, or you, Longaville, or you, Dumain, in leaden and dull

contemplation have learned to write such fiery, passionate verses as the prompting eyes of beauty's tutors have enriched you with?

"Other slow arts occupy the brain, and only the brain, and therefore scarcely show a harvest from the heavy toil of their barren and uninspired practitioners. These dreary studies occupy the brain and have no application outside of the brain.

"But love, first learned in a lady's eyes, lives not alone immured and walled up in the brain. Instead, love, with the speed of winds and storms, runs as swiftly as thought in every faculty and function, and gives to every faculty and function a double power, over and above their customary functions.

"Love adds a precious seeing to the eye. A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind. The eyes of a lover can look at an eagle and make the eagle blind, proving that the lover is brighter than the Sun, which cannot blind the eagle.

"A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound. When the ears of a thief, who is suspicious of every sound, are shut, the lover's ears will still be able to hear.

"Love's feeling is softer and more sensitive than are the tender horns of snails who carry around their shell.

"Love's tongue proves that dainty, fastidious Bacchus, the god of wine and feasting, is gross in taste in comparison.

"As for valor, is not Love a Hercules, constantly climbing trees in the garden of the Hesperides?"

One of Hercules' famous labors was stealing some golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, immortal nymphs who lived in the west and took care of the garden.

Biron continued, "Love is as subtle as the Sphinx and as sweet and musical as bright Apollo's lute, which is strung with his hair."

The Sphinx is a mythological creature with the head of a human and the body of a lion. In Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, the Sphinx, which has the head of a woman, asks Oedipus this riddle: What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening? If Oedipus cannot answer this riddle correctly, the Sphinx will kill him. Fortunately, Oedipus does answer the riddle correctly: Man, who goes on hands and knees as a crawling baby, two legs as a healthy adult, and two legs and a cane as an old person.

Biron continued, "And when Love speaks, the voices of all the gods make Heaven drowsy with the harmony.

"Never has a poet dared to touch a pen to write until his ink is mixed with Love's sighs. Oh, once his pen is so mixed, then his lines ravish savage ears and plant mild humility in tyrants.

"From women's eyes I derive this doctrine. Women's eyes sparkle with the true Promethean fire — they constantly throw out sparks of the true Promethean fire."

Prometheus, who was a Titan (one of the primordial — which means existing from the beginning of time — giant gods who ruled the Earth until Zeus conquered them), stole fire

from the gods and gave it to early Humankind. In some versions of the myth, the fire was the spark of life.

Biron continued, “Women’s eyes are the books, the arts, the academies, that show, contain, and nourish all the world. Without the help of women’s eyes, no man can prove to be excellent in anything.

“And you were fools to forswear these women, or if you keep the oath you swore, you will prove to be fools.

“For wisdom’s sake, a word that all men love,

“Or for love’s sake, a word that loves — inspires and is lovable to — all men,

“Or for men’s sake, the authors of these women,

“Or for women’s sake, by whom we men are men,

“Let us immediately and once and for all time lose our oaths so that we can find ourselves, or else we will lose ourselves by keeping our oaths.”

Biron was thinking of Matthew 16:25: “*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

“It is within the beliefs of our religion to be thus forsworn, for charity itself fulfills the law, and who can sever love from charity?”

Biron was thinking of Romans 13:8: “*Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

One meaning of “Who can sever love from charity?” is “Who can separate *amor* (sexual love) from *caritas* (spiritual love)?”

Biron was thinking of 1 Corinthians 13:13: “*And now abideth faith, hope and love, even these three; but the chiefest of these is love*” (1599 Geneva Bible). In many translations, the word “charity” is used instead of “love.” For example, this is the translation in the King James Bible: “*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*”

King Ferdinand said, “Saint Cupid, then! And, soldiers, to the battlefield!”

“Saint Cupid” was a battle cry; the standard English battle cry was “Saint George!”

Biron said, “Advance your standards, and set upon them, lords. Pell-mell! Down with them! But be first advised that in our conflict you get the Sun of them.”

This is one meaning of what Biron said: “Lift up the poles holding your battle flags and let’s go fight the enemy. Pell-mell! Down with the enemy! But be first advised that in our conflict that you get the Sun so that it is shining in their faces; that will give us a military advantage.”

This is another meaning of what Biron said: “Lift up the ‘poles’ in front and just under your waist and let’s get on top of the ladies, lords. Fast and furious! Let’s get active so that we can make the enemy ‘die’! But be first advised that in our ‘conflict’ with the ladies we get each of them pregnant with a son.”

In this society, one meaning of “die” is to “have an orgasm.”

Longaville said, “Now to plain-dealing and plain-speaking; let us lay these glozes — bits of superficial wordplay — aside. Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France?”

“Yes, and to win them, too,” King Ferdinand said. “Therefore, let us devise some entertainment for them in their tents.”

Biron said, “First, from the park let us conduct the ladies toward that place, and as we head there let every man seize the hand of the fair woman he loves.

“In the afternoon we will with some exceptional pastime entertain them — some sort of entertainment that we can come up with in the short time we have to do the planning.

“We know that revels, dances, masquerades, and merry hours run before fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.”

“Away! Away!” King Ferdinand said. “Let’s go now! No time shall be omitted that will come to pass and may by us be fitted. We will make good use of all the time available to us.”

Biron cried, “*Allons! Allons!*”

“*Allons! Allons!*” is French for “Let’s go! Let’s go!”

King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain exited.

Alone, Biron said to himself, “Sowed cockle reaped no corn.”

This means, “If you sow weeds, you will not reap wheat.”

Biron continued, “And justice always whirls in equal measure: Light wenches may prove to be plagues to men forsworn. If so, our copper buys no better treasure.”

This means, “Justice always whirls around like the Wheel of Fortune in a fair and equitable manner. Wanton women may prove to be plagues to men who have broken their vows. But even if so, our copper coins — which have little value — can buy no better treasure.”

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

The schoolmaster Holofernes, the curate Sir Nathaniel, and Constable Dull talked together in King Ferdinand's park. The three men had dined together at the home of the father of one of Holofernes' pupils.

Holofernes said, "*Satis quod sufficit.*"

The Latin sentence means, "Enough is sufficient." As a proverb, its meaning is this: "Enough is as good as a feast."

"I praise God for you, sir," Sir Nathaniel said to Holofernes. "Your remarks at dinner have been sharp and full of wise sayings; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, audacious without impudence, learned without arrogance, and novel without heresy. I did converse the other day with a companion of the King's, who is graced with the name of, nominated, or called Don Adriano de Armado."

Holofernes said, "*Novi hominem tanquam te.*"

The Latin sentence means, "I know the man as well as I know you."

Holofernes continued, "Armado's disposition is lofty, his discourse peremptory and resolved, his tongue refined and smooth, his eye ambitious, his gait majestic, and his general behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical — boastful and vainglorious. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected and foppish, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate and affectedly foreign, as I may call it."

Sir Nathaniel said, "A most singular and choice epithet — a most singular and appropriate turn of phrase."

He drew out his notebook so he could write down the phrase.

Holofernes said, "Armado draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple, aka material, of his argument, aka subject. I abhor such fanatical phantasimes."

A phantasime is an extravagantly behaved person.

Holofernes continued, "I abhor such insociable, aka intolerable, and point-devise, aka affectedly precise and immaculate, companions."

"I abhor such rackers of orthography — he is a person who tortures correct spelling, as we can tell by the way he pronounces words."

"Armado speaks 'dout,' *sine* b, when he should say 'doubt'; he speaks 'det,' when he should pronounce 'debt' — d, e, b, t, not d, e, t."

*Sine* is Latin for "without."

Holofernes continued, "Armado clepeth a calf, cauf; half, hauf; neighbor *vocatur* nebor; neigh abbreviated ne."

“Clepe<sup>th</sup>” is an archaic verb meaning “calls.”

Holofernes pronounced the “igh” in the words “neighbor” and “neigh”; he pronounced it somewhat like one of the ways of pronouncing the German word “*ich*,” which means “I.”

“*Vocatur*” is a Latin word that means “is called.”

Holofernes was a member of an English Renaissance group who wanted English words to be spelled and pronounced as closely as possible to those Latin words on which the English word was thought to be based. The English word “doute” became “doubt” because of the Latin word “*dubitum*,” and the English word “dette” became “debt” because of the Latin word “*debitum*.” Holofernes wanted the letter “b” in these words to be pronounced.

Holofernes continued, “This is abominable — which he would call abominable.”

People used to think that the word “abominable” came from the Latin phrase “*ab homine*,” which means “away from man,” or “unnatural.” Actually, it comes from the Latin word “*abominabilis*,” which means “contemptible.”

Holofernes continued, “It insinuateth me of insanie. *Ne intelligis, domine?* To make frantic, lunatic.”

Holofernes was complaining that such pronunciations drove him insane.

“*Ne intelligis, domine?*” is Latin for “Do you understand, sir?”

Sir Nathaniel said, “*Laus Deo, bone intelligo.*”

He had meant to say, “Praise be to God, I understand well,” but he made a mistake. He said “*bone*” instead of “*bene*.”

Holofernes said, “*Bone? Bone for bene?* Priscian is a little scratched, but it will serve.”

Priscian, who flourished in 500 A.D., was a scholar whose Latin grammar book was used for many centuries.

“To break Priscian’s head” meant “to mangle Latin grammar.” Here, Holofernes was saying that Sir Nathaniel’s Latin was a little wrong, but it would serve — Holofernes understood what Sir Nathaniel meant.

Sir Nathaniel looked up and asked, “*Videsne quis venit?*”

The Latin sentence means, “Do you see who is coming?”

Holofernes looked and then replied, “*Video, et gaudeo.*”

The Latin sentence means, “I see, and I rejoice.”

Don Adriana de Armado, Mote, and Costard walked over to Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel.

Armado greeted them: “Chirrah!”

As usual, Holofernes disliked Armado’s pronunciation: “*Quare* ‘chirrah,’ not ‘sirrah’?”

*Quare* is Latin for “why.”

“Sirrah” was a word used to address a male of inferior status to that of the speaker.

Armado said, “Men of peace, well encountered.”

Holofernes replied, “Most military sir, salutation.”

Mote said quietly to Costard, “They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.”

Costard replied, “Oh, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words.”

An alms-basket was a basket used to collect scraps of leftover food for the impoverished. Armado, Holofernes, and Sir Nathaniel used fancy words — those left over from the conversation of ordinary people, who do not use them.

Costard continued, “I marvel that your master has not eaten you for a word, for you are not so long by the head — as tall — as the word ‘*honorificabilitudinitatibus*.’”

“*Honorificabilitudinitatibus*” is the dative or ablative case of a Medieval Latin word that means, “In the state of being honored.” The English word “honorificableness,” meaning “honorableness,” is interesting because it has only alternating vowels and consonants. The word appeared in *Bailey’s Dictionary*, published in 1721.

Costard continued to remark on Mote’s small size: “You are more easily swallowed than a flap-dragon.”

A flap-dragon is a raisin in brandy that has been set on fire.

Mote said, “Peace! Silence! The peal begins.”

The peal was the noise of conversation between Holofernes and Armado.

Armado asked Holofernes, “Monsieur, are you not lettered?”

Mote said, “Yes, yes, he is; he teaches boys the hornbook.”

The hornbook was used in teaching. A leaf of paper showed the alphabet; it was placed on a wooden rectangular block with a handle and covered with transparent horn to protect it. When heated, horn becomes malleable. When scraped thin enough, horn is transparent.

Mote asked Holofernes, “What is ‘a, b,’ spelt backward, with the horn on his head?”

Holofernes replied, “The answer is ‘ba,’ *pueritia*, with a horn added.”

The word “*pueritia*” is Latin for childhood; Holofernes was calling Mote a child.

Mote said, “Baa, most silly sheep with a horn. You hear his learning.”

He was making fun of Holofernes by calling him a sheep.

Holofernes asked, “*Quis, quis*, you consonant?”

“*Quis*” is Latin for “who.” He was asking, “Who is the sheep, consonant?”

By calling Mote a consonant, Holofernes was saying that Mote is insignificant. A vowel can form a syllable by itself, but a consonant cannot. To say “b,” one must say the consonant “b”

and the vowel “e.”

Mote replied to Holofernes’ question, “The third of the five vowels, if you repeat them; or the fifth, if I repeat them.”

Holofernes said, “I will repeat them — a, e, i — ”

Mote finished the sentence that began with Holofernes’ “I”: “— the sheep.”

In other words, “I — that is, Holofernes — am the sheep.”

Mote continued, “The other two vowels conclude it — o, u.”

In other words, “Oh, ewe” or “Oh, you.” “U” being the fifth of five syllables, as Mote pronounced them, “u” — that is, ewe, or you, Holofernes — is the sheep.

Armado, who got the joke, said, “Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterraneum, a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit! Snip, snap, quick and home! It rejoiceth my intellect: true wit!”

“Meditraneum” was Armado’s way of pronouncing “Mediterranean.”

A “touch” is a “hit” in fencing; a “venue” is a “sword-thrust” in fencing. “Home” means “right to the target.”

“To snip-snap” is “to engage in smart repartee.” “Quick and home” means “by being quick, you hit the target.”

Mote said, “Offered by a child to an old man, who is wit-old.”

A “wittold” is a witting — knowing — cuckold, the husband who knows that he has an unfaithful wife but who does nothing about it.

Holofernes asked, “What is the figure? What is the figure?”

“Figure” means “figure of speech” or “emblem.”

Mote replied, “Horns.”

Horns were said to grow on the forehead of a cuckold, and so they were the emblems of a cuckold.

Holofernes said, “Thou disputest like an infant, a child. Go, whip thy gig.”

“Whip thy gig” meant “play with your top.” A whip could be used to keep a top spinning.

Mote said, “Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your infamy *manu cita* — I will make a gig out of a cuckold’s horn.”

“*Manu cita*” is Latin for “with a ready hand.”

Costard said to Mote, “If I had but just one penny in the world, I would give it to you so you can buy gingerbread. Wait, there is the very remuneration I had from your boss, you halfpenny — little — purse of wit, you pigeon-egg — small egg — of discretion.”

Costard gave Mote some money and said, “Oh, if the Heavens were so pleased that they would make you my bastard, what a joyful father you would make me!”

“There; you have it — the money — *ad* dunghill, at the fingers’ ends, as they say.”

A pile of manure is a dunghill; dung is manure.

Holofernes said, “Oh, I smell false Latin; Costard used ‘dunghill’ for ‘*unguem*.’”

The word “*unguem*” is Latin for “fingertip.” The Latin phrase “*ad unguem*” is Latin for “to the fingertip,” which is idiomatic for “exact in detail.”

Armado said to Holofernes, “Arts-man, aka scholar, preambulate, aka walk ahead of the others with me, we will be singuled, aka singled-out, from the barbarous. Do you not educate youth at the charge-house, aka school, on the top of the mountain?”

Holofernes replied, “Or *mons* — the hill.”

Armado said, “At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.”

He preferred the more grandiose geographical structure.

Hearing “mounting,” as in “sexual mounting,” rather than “mountain,” Holofernes replied, “I do, *sans* question.”

“*Sans*” is French for “without.”

Armado said, “Sir, it is the King’s most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate — salute — the Princess at her pavilion in the posteriors of this day, which the rude multitude call the afternoon.”

“Posteriors” meant “later parts,” as well as “buttocks.”

Holofernes replied, “The posterior of the day, most generous and noble-minded sir, is liable and apt, congruent and fitting, and measurable and suited for the afternoon. The word is well culled, chosen, sweet, and apt, I do assure you, sir, I do assure you.”

Armado replied, “Sir, the King is a noble gentleman, and my familiar, I do assure ye, my very good friend. As for what is inward and secret and private between us, let it pass. I do beseech and ask thee to remember thy courtesy. I beseech thee, apparel thy head.”

The phrase “remember thy courtesy” means either “take your hat off” or “put your hat on.”

Holofernes had taken off his hat for some reason.

Armado continued, “And among these private things the King and I have shared other importunate, burdensome, and most serious designs, and of great import indeed, too, but let that pass, for I must tell thee, it will please his grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder, and with his royal finger, thus, dally with my excrescence, aka my hair, with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass.

“By the world, I recount no fable. Some certain special honors it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado, a soldier, a man of travel, who has seen the world; but let that pass.

“The very all of all, aka sum of everything, aka most important thing, is — but, sweet heart, I do implore secrecy — that the King would have me present the Princess, sweet chuck, aka sweet chick, with some delightful ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antic, aka grotesque show, or firework.

“Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions of wit and sudden breakings out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal, to the end to crave your assistance.”

Holofernes knew immediately the kind of entertainment that he wanted King Ferdinand — and Armado — to present to the Princess of France: “Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies.”

The Nine Worthies were nine great men: three from the Bible, three from classical times, and three from romances.

The three from the Bible were Joshua, King David, and Judas Maccabaeus.

The three from classical times were Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar.

The three from romances were King Arthur, Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon.

Holofernes, however, wanted the Roman Pompey the Great and the mythological hero Hercules to be among the Nine Worthies.

Holofernes continued, “Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies. Sir Nathaniel, as concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day, to be rendered by our assistants, at the King’s command, and this most gallant, illustrious, and learned gentleman, before the Princess — I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.”

Holofernes was excited. He said “illustrious” instead of “illuminous,” and his syntax was not clear. But it was clear that he wanted to present the Nine Worthies, and he believed that they could find performers who would be fit to present the Nine Worthies.

Sir Nathaniel asked, “Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?”

Holofernes replied, “Joshua, yourself; myself; and this gallant gentleman, Judas Maccabaeus.”

Holofernes was so excited that he continued to not be clear. Perhaps he meant that he would play King David. “This gallant gentleman” was Armado.

He continued, “This swain, Costard, because of his great limb or joint and his great size, shall pass as Pompey the Great. The page, Mote, will be Hercules —”

Armado interrupted, “Pardon, sir; error. Mote is little; he is not quantity enough for that Worthy’s thumb. Mote is not even as big as the end of Hercules’ club.”

“Shall I have audience?” Holofernes said. “Listen to me. Mote shall present Hercules in minority. He will play Hercules as a baby. His entrance and exit shall be strangling a snake; and I will have an apology — a prologue — for that purpose.”

When Hercules was an infant, Juno, Queen of the gods, who hated Hercules because her husband, Jupiter, had cheated on her and fathered Hercules with a mortal woman, sent two snakes to kill him as he slept. The infant Hercules woke up and used his great strength to strangle the two snakes.

Mote said, “An excellent device! An excellent plan! So, if any of the audience hiss, you may cry, ‘Well done, Hercules! Now you are crushing the snake!’ That is the way to make an

offense gracious, although few have the grace to do it.”

Audiences hiss actors when audience members dislike them. But in this case, Holofernes could pretend that the hissing of the audience was the hissing of the snake.

Armado asked, “What about the rest of the Worthies?”

Holofernes replied, “I will play three myself.”

Mote said, “You are a thrice-worthy gentleman!”

Armado asked, “Shall I tell you a thing?”

Holofernes replied, “We attend. We are listening.”

Armado said, “We will have, if this fadge not, an antic.”

In other words, “If this presentation of the Nine Worthies does not succeed, we will have an antic — a grotesque spectacle.”

This could mean that if the presentation of the Nine Worthies failed, it would be a grotesque spectacle, or that if the presentation of the Nine Worthies failed, they would have as a backup entertainment an antic.

He then said, “I beseech you, follow me.”

They had stopped to talk because Holofernes was so excited, but now Armado wanted to start walking again.

Holofernes said, “*Via*, goodman Dull!”

One meaning of “*Via*” in Italian is “Hurry up!”

He then said to Constable Dull, “Thou hast spoken no word all this while.”

Constable Dull replied, “Nor understood none neither, sir.”

“*Allons!*” Holofernes said. “We will employ thee. We will find something for thee to do.”

“*Allons!*” is French for “Let’s go!”

Constable Dull said, “I’ll make one in a dance, or something like that; or I will play on the tabor — a small drum — to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.”

“Most dull, honest Dull!” Holofernes said. “To our sport, away! To our entertainment, let’s go!”

## — 5.2 —

The Princess, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine talked together. They had received presents and poems from the men of Navarre who loved them: King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain.

The Princess said, “Sweet hearts, we shall be rich before we depart Navarre and go home to France, if fairings come thus plentifully in.”

“Fairings” are presents that are called “fairings” because the word originally referred to small presents bought at fairs.

The Princess, who had received a pendant depicting a lady with a border made of diamonds, said, “A lady walled about with diamonds! Look what I have received from the loving King!”

Rosaline asked, “Madame, did anything else come along with that?”

“Nothing but this!” the Princess said, waving a piece of paper. “Yes, as much love in rhyme as would be crammed up in a sheet of paper, written on both sides of the leaf, margin and all, so that he was forced to put his wax seal on the place where he had written the name of Cupid.”

“That was the way to make his godhead wax and grow,” Rosaline said. “For he has been for five thousand years a boy.”

People in this society believed that the world had existed for only 5,000 years, and so Cupid had been in existence all that time, and he had been a boy all that time.

Katherine said, “Yes, and he has been a wily, trouble-making fellow who deserves to be hung on a gallows, too.”

“You’ll never be friends with him,” Rosaline said. “He killed your sister, who died because of Love.”

“He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy, and so she died,” Katherine said. “Had she been light, like you, of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit, she might have been a grandmother before she died. And so may you; for a light heart lives long.”

The four women were able to make jokes about each other; friends sometimes engage in light teasing and light insults.

Rosaline asked, “What’s your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?”

The word “light” can mean “lighthearted,” or it can mean “having light heels.” A woman with light heels is a wanton woman.

Katherine replied, “A light condition — disposition — in a dark beauty.”

“We need more light to find your meaning out,” Rosaline said.

“You’ll mar the light by taking it in snuff,” Katherine said. “Therefore, I’ll darkly end the argument.”

When a candle is snuffed, the light is marred — the light goes out. The idiom “to take in snuff” means “to be annoyed.”

“Whatever you do, you do it still in the dark,” Rosaline said.

One meaning of “do it” is “have sex.”

Two meanings of “still” are “always” and “not moving.”

“So do not you, for you are a light wench,” Katherine said.

Katherine had used “light” to mean “wanton.”

Deliberately misinterpreting “light” to refer to her weight, Rosaline replied, “Indeed, I weigh not as much as you, and therefore I am light.”

“You weigh me not?” Katherine said, “Oh, that means that you don’t care for me.”

“I have a great reason for that,” Rosaline said, “for ‘past cure is still past care.’ What cannot be helped is not to be worried about.”

The Princess approved of this exchange of witty lines and compared it to a tennis match in which words, not a ball, were volleyed back and forth: “Well bandied both; this is a set of wit well played.

“But Rosaline, you have a favor, too. Who sent it? And what is it?”

By “favor,” the Princess meant a “mark of favor or esteem from a lover,” aka “love token,” but Rosaline deliberately misinterpreted the word as meaning “appearance.”

Rosaline said, “I wish you knew. If my face were as fair as yours, my favor would be as great. But be a witness to this” — she held up a piece of paper — “I have love verses, too. I thank Biron for them. The numbers — the poetic meter — are true, and if his numbering — enumeration — of my good points was also true, I would be the fairest goddess walking on the ground. In these lines of love poetry, I am compared to twenty thousand beautiful women. Oh, he has drawn my picture in his letter!”

“Is his picture of you anything like the real you?” the Princess asked.

“There is much likeness in the letters; no likeness at all in the praise,” Rosaline replied.

The letters were written with black ink, and Rosaline was black, so the letters and Rosaline were alike. But Rosaline knew, of course, that all the praise heaped on her in the love poem was much more than she deserved. In fact, all of the ladies were amused by the undeserved praise heaped upon them in their love letters.

“You are as beauteous as ink,” the Princess said. “That is a good conclusion.”

Katherine said, “Rosaline is as fair as a text B in a copy-book.”

She was referring a highly ornate gothic capital B in a copybook — such a letter required much black ink.

Rosaline said, “Beware pencils.”

The ladies were beginning to metaphorically draw — describe — each other’s faces. Such an activity can lead to hurt feelings, even if done humorously.

Rosaline continued, “Let me not die your debtor.”

In other words, let me not die without having first repaid you the insult you gave to me and that I owe you.

She continued, “My red dominical, my golden letter, oh, that your face were not so full of O’s!”

Katherine’s face was pink and her hair was golden — light-colored. A red dominical is a red letter that was used to mark Sundays and feast days in an almanac. Golden letters were also

used to mark Sundays and feast days. Katherine had survived smallpox, a disease that left her face bearing O-shaped scars.

The Princess said, “A pox on that jest! And I beshrew all shrews — I scold all scolds!”

She then asked, “But, Katherine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?”

Katherine replied, “Madam, this glove.”

In this society, gloves were ornate and expensive.

The Princess asked, “Didn’t he send you two gloves?”

“Yes, madam, and moreover he sent me some thousand verses written by himself, a faithful lover. Those verses are a huge expression of hypocrisy, vilely written, and of profound simplicity — complete foolishness.”

Maria said, “This letter and these pearls were sent to me from Longaville. The letter is too long by half a mile.”

“I think no less,” the Princess said. “Don’t you wish in your heart that the pearl necklace was longer and the letter was short?”

Maria wrapped her hands in the necklace and replied, “Yes, or I wish these hands might never part.”

The Princess said, “We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.”

The four men were wooing the four women in a courtly, old-fashioned way; the women wondered whether they were being mocked. The women preferred a different kind of wooing, one involving real conversation rather than undeserved and extravagant praise in love verses.

Rosaline said, “They are worse fools because they deserve to be mocked by us like this. That same Biron I’ll torture before I go back to France. Oh, I wish that I knew he were well and truly captured by love! How I would make him fawn and beg and seek and wait the season — wait until I’m ready — and observe the times — observe the rules — and spend his prodigal wits in bootless, unavailing rhymes and shape his service wholly to my commands and hests and make him proud to make me proud who jests!

“So pair-taunt-like would I oversway and override his state that he should be my fool and I his fate.”

“Pair-taunt-like” meant “like holding the winning hand in an old card game called post and pair.” A winning hand is a pair-taunt — a double pair royal.

The Princess said, “None are so surely caught, when they are caught, as a wit — an intelligent man — who has turned fool.

“Folly, in wisdom originated, has wisdom’s warrant and the help of education and wit’s own grace to grace — to do honor to — a learned fool.”

In other words, an intelligent man who believes something foolish will use his intelligence and his education to try to show that the foolish thing he believes is actually wise.

Rosaline said, “The blood of youth burns not with such excess as gravity’s revolt to wantonness.”

In other words, a hot-blooded young man does not burn as fiercely as a serious, mature man who stops being serious and mature so that he can be wanton.

Maria said, “Folly in fools bears not so strong a note as foolery in the wise, when wit does dote, since all the power thereof it does apply to prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.”

In other words, a wise man who begins to act like a fool will act more foolishly than a fool because the wise man will use his wisdom to try to prove that it is worthwhile to be simple-minded.

The Princess said, “Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his face. He is amused by something.”

Boyet walked over to the four ladies and said, “Oh, I am stabbed with laughter! I have been laughing so much that my sides hurt. Where’s her grace? Where’s the Princess?”

The Princess asked, “What is your news, Boyet?”

“Prepare yourself, madam, prepare yourself!” Boyet replied. “Arm yourselves, wenches, arm yourselves! Encounters are being mounted to disturb your peace.

“Lovers, disguised, are approaching you, and they are armed in arguments of love. You’ll be surprised and taken off your guard. Muster your wits and stand in your own defense, or hide your heads like cowards and flee from here.”

The Princess said, “Saint Denis to Saint Cupid!”

Saint Denis is the patron saint of France.

She continued, “Who are they who charge their breath and voices as if they were charging — loading — weapons against us? Tell us, scout; tell us, spy.”

Boyet replied, “Under the cool shade of a sycamore tree, I thought to close my eyes and nap some half an hour, but my purposed rest was interrupted because I saw King Ferdinand and his companions advancing toward that sycamore tree. Warily and carefully I stole into a nearby neighboring thicket, and I overheard what you shall hear over again, and that is, by and by, in disguise they will come here.

“Their herald is Mote, who is a pretty, knavish page, who well by heart has conned his message he will recite to you. Action and accent — the appropriate gestures and correct emphasis of words — they taught him there, telling him, ‘Thus you must speak,’ and ‘thus you must your body bear.’

“And every now and then they expressed a suspicion that being in the presence of your majestic presence would make him forget his part ‘for,’ said the King, ‘an angel you shall see, yet fear not, but speak boldly and audaciously.’

“The boy replied, ‘An angel is not evil; I should have feared her had she been a devil.’

“Hearing that, all laughed and clapped him on the shoulder, making the bold wag by their praises bolder.

“One rubbed his elbow like this to express his satisfaction, and he grinned and swore that a better speech was never spoken before.

“Another made the OK sign with his finger and his thumb and then cried, ‘*Via!* Come on! We will do it, come what will come.’

“The third he capered and danced joyously, and cried, ‘All goes well.’

“The fourth turned on the toe and attempted to pirouette, and down he fell.

“With that, they all tumbled on the ground, with a very zealous and profound laughter — but in the midst of this ridiculous amusement the solemn tears of overpowering emotion appeared and checked their folly.”

“What?” the Princess asked. “Are they coming to visit us?”

“They are, they are,” Boyet replied. “And they will be disguised. They will be dressed like Muscovites or Russians, I believe. Their purpose is to parley and talk, to court, and to dance; and every one will perform a love-feat — a feat done out of love — for his loved one, whom each man will know by the favors — the love tokens — that they formerly did bestow.”

“Will they do so?” the Princess asked. “The gallants shall be tasked, for, ladies, we shall each of us be masked and not a man of them shall have the privilege, aka grace, despite their wooing, to see a lady’s face. They will see the favors and masks and not our faces, and so they will not know who we really are.

“Rosaline, you shall wear the pendant that King Ferdinand gave to me, and that way the King will court you, thinking that you are his dear. You take the pendant, and give me the love token that Biron gave to you, and that way Biron will take me for Rosaline.

“Katherine and Maria, exchange your favors, too. That way, your lovers will woo the wrong women because they will be deceived by these exchanges of favors.”

“Come on, then,” Rosaline said. “Wear the favors where they can be easily seen.”

Katherine asked, “But in this exchange of favors, what is your intention?”

The Princess said, “The intended result of my intention is to cross their intention. They are doing this only in mocking merriment; they want to make fun of us. And mock for mock is only my intention. They want to make fun of us, but we shall make fun of them.

“They shall unbosom their counsels of love to the wrong loved one, and we will mock them the next occasion that we meet, when, with our faces showing, we shall talk to them and greet them.”

Rosaline asked, “But shall we dance, if they ask us to dance?”

“No, we will prefer to die than move a foot,” the Princess said. “Nor to their prepared and written-out speech will we give any favor and grace, but while it is spoken each of us will turn away her face.”

Feeling sympathy for Mote, Boyet said, “Why, that contempt will kill the speaker’s heart, and quite divorce his memory from his part.”

“That is why I will do it,” the Princess said, “and I have no doubt the rest will never come in, if the speaker be out — if he is at a loss.

“There’s no such sport as sport by sport overthrown, to make theirs ours and ours none but our own.

“So shall we stay, mocking intended game, and they, well mocked, will go away with shame.”

She wanted to play a practical joke on the men that would trump the practical joke — disguising themselves as Russians — that the men intended to play on her and the other ladies.

A trumpet sounded to announce the arrival of visitors.

Boyet said, “The trumpet sounds. Put on your masks; the men disguised as Russians have come.”

The four women put on masks to hide their faces. They also wore love tokens, but not their own.

Some black musicians arrived, along with Mote. Then came King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, all of whom were disguised as Russians. They were wearing visors and Russian clothing. A visor is a mask, or a disguise that helps hide one’s face.

Mote said, “All hail, the richest beauties on the earth!”

Boyet said, “Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.”

The ladies were wearing masks made of taffeta fabric.

Mote continued, “Here is a holy company of the fairest dames —”

The ladies turned their backs to him.

Mote continued, “— who ever turned their ... backs ... to mortal views!”

Biron whispered to Mote, “Not their backs! Their eyes, villain, their eyes!”

Mote said, “— who ever turned their eyes to mortal views! Out —”

Boyet said, “True; Mote is out of countenance indeed. He is disconcerted.”

Mote continued, “Out of your favors, Heavenly spirits, vouchsafe not to behold —”

Biron whispered to Mote, “Not ‘not to behold’! *Once* to behold, rogue.”

Mote continued, “Once to behold with your Sun-beamed eyes ... with your Sun-beamed eyes —”

He was so disconcerted that he was forgetting the speech he had memorized.

Boyet said, “They will not answer to the epithet ‘son-beamed.’ It would be best to say ‘daughter-beamed’ eyes.”

More complained, “They do not listen to me, and that brings me out of countenance.”

Biron said, “Is this your word-perfect recitation of the speech that you promised us? Be gone, you rogue!”

Mote exited.

Rosaline, pretending to be the Princess, said, "What do these strangers want? Find out, Boyet. If they speak our language, we want some plainspoken man to tell us their intentions. Find out what they want."

Boyet asked Biron, "What do you want with the Princess?"

"Nothing but a peaceful and courteous visit," Biron replied.

Rosaline asked, "What do they say they want?"

Boyet replied, "Nothing but a peaceful and courteous visit."

"Why, that they have," Rosaline said, "so tell them to be gone."

Boyet said, "She says, you have what you want, and you may now be gone."

King Ferdinand said, "Say to her, we have measured — traveled — many miles to tread a measure — dance a dance — with her on this grass."

Boyet said to Rosaline, "They say that they have measured many a mile to tread a measure with you on this grass."

"That is not true," Rosaline replied. "Ask them how many inches are in one mile. If they have measured many miles, the measure then of one mile is easily told."

Boyet said, "If to come hither you have measured miles, and many miles, the Princess bids you say how many inches make up one mile."

Biron replied, "Tell her that we measure them by weary steps."

Tired of "translating" the words of the "Russians," Boyet said, "She hears you herself."

Rosaline asked, "How many weary steps, of the many weary miles you have gone over, are numbered in the travel of one mile?"

Biron said, "We number nothing that we spend for you. Our duty is so rich, so infinite, that we may do it always without reckoning numbers. Do us the favor of showing us the sunshine of your face, so that we, like Sun-worshipping savages, may worship it. Take off your mask."

Rosaline said, "My face is only a Moon, and it is clouded, too."

Rosaline's face was a face of night; it was dark. Like the Moon, it shone by reflected light. Rosaline's face reflected the light of her superior, the Princess, whom she was pretending to be. Rosaline's face was clouded; a mask hid it.

King Ferdinand, who thought that Rosaline was the Princess, said, "Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do!"

The clouds — the masks — were blessed because they were so close to the Moon — the lady's face, and to ladies' faces in general.

King Ferdinand continued, "Permit, bright Moon, and these your attending stars, to shine, with those clouds removed, upon our watery eyes."

The Moon was known for having an effect on water.

King Ferdinand wanted the ladies to take off their masks.

Rosaline replied, “Oh, vain petitioner! Beg a greater matter; beg for something more important. You now request nothing but Moonshine in the water.”

“Moonshine in the water” is an idiom meaning “something foolish.”

King Ferdinand said, “Then, in our measure do but permit us one change.”

The word “change” was a pun meaning both “one round of dancing” and “one change of the Moon.” The change he wanted was that the Moon be unclouded.

He added, “You wanted me to beg for something; this begging is not strange.”

“Play, music, then!” Rosaline said. “You must do it soon.”

Music began to play, but Rosaline said, “Not yet! No dance! I have changed my mind! Thus change I like the Moon.”

“Won’t you dance?” King Ferdinand said. “How did you come to be thus estranged and unfriendly?”

“You took the Moon at full, but now she’s changed,” Rosaline replied.

“Yet still she is the Moon, and I am the man in the Moon,” King Ferdinand said.

The King’s intentions toward the Princess included marriage and sharing a bed.

Music began to play, and King Ferdinand said, “The music plays; please give some response to it.”

He wanted her to dance.

Rosaline said, “Our ears allow us to have a response to music.”

“But your legs should do it,” King Ferdinand said.

“Since you are strangers and come here by chance, we’ll not be nice — we won’t stand on formality. Let’s hold hands. But we will not dance.”

“Why do we hold hands, then?” King Ferdinand asked.

“Only so we can part as friends,” Rosaline said.

She then said to the other ladies, “Curtsy, sweet hearts; and so the measure ends.”

“More measure of this measure,” King Ferdinand said. “Be not nice.”

He wanted the music to continue, and he wanted to dance, and he felt that the “Princess” — the masked Rosaline — was being nice, aka shy or coy. He also wanted to dance because some dances included kissing.

“We can afford to do no more at such a price,” Rosaline said.

She was unwilling to dance with and to kiss King Ferdinand.

“Prize you yourselves,” King Ferdinand requested. “Put your own price on yourselves. What buys your company?”

“Only your absence buys our company,” Rosaline said.

“That can never be,” King Ferdinand said. “If we Moscovites are absent and away from you, we cannot enjoy your company, and so we cannot buy your company.”

“Then we cannot be bought,” Rosaline said, “and so, adieu. I say adieu twice to your visor, and half of once to you.”

A visor is a mask, or a disguise that helps hide one’s face. Rosaline was strongly hinting that she knew that King Ferdinand was in disguise. By saying adieu twice to the King’s visor, she was saying that she would like for him to get rid of the disguise. By saying adieu only half of once to him, she was saying that she was rejecting him, but it was not a major rejection. Under different circumstances, such as meeting face to face with no masks and no disguises worn and no games played, the ladies and the gentlemen could possibly get along very well together.

“If you decline to dance, then let’s talk some more,” King Ferdinand requested.

“In private, then,” Rosaline replied.

“I am best pleased with that,” King Ferdinand said, and the two withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Biron, disguised as a Russian, said to the masked Princess, whom he thought was his beloved, Rosaline, “White-handed mistress, I request one sweet word with you.”

The Princess replied, “Honey, and milk, and sugar; there are three sweet words.”

“No, then, let’s make it two treys, as if we were throwing dice, and if you grow so nice and precise, I’ll make my three sweet words metheglin, wort, and malmsey. These are three strong sweet drinks. Well run, dice! There’s half-a-dozen sweets.”

“Here is a seventh sweet word: adieu,” the Princess said. “Since you play games while playing a game, I’ll play no more with you. You cog the dice.”

To “cog the dice” is to “load the dice,” and so it means to defraud, deceive, and tell lies.

“One word in secret,” Biron said.

“Let it not be sweet,” the Princess said.

“You grieve my gall,” Biron said. “You hit me in a sore spot.”

“Gall!” the Princess said. “Bitter.”

“And therefore suitable,” Biron said.

Gall is bitter, so “bitter” is a suitable word for “gall.” Biron was much disappointed in his reception by “Rosaline,” and so he was bitter.

Biron and the Princess withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Dumain said to Maria, who was wearing the love token that Dumain had given to Katherine, “Will you permit me to exchange a word with you?”

“Name it,” Maria said.

“Fair lady —” Dumain began.

“Do you say so? Is that your word that you wish to exchange?” Maria said. “Fair *lord* — take that in exchange for your fair *lady*.”

“If it will please you, let us talk as much in private, and then I’ll bid you adieu.”

Dumain and Maria withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Katherine said to Longaville, who thought that she was Maria, “Was your mask made without a tongue?”

Some masks were held in place by a “tongue” — a piece protruding into the mouth and held by the teeth.

Katherine was asking Longaville why he was so quiet.

Longaville replied, “I know the reason, lady, why you ask.”

“Oh, I long to know what you think is the reason! Quickly, sir; I long.”

“You have a double tongue within your mask, and you would give my speechless mask half,” Longaville replied.

A double tongue is a deceptive tongue.

Katherine said, “‘Veal,’ quoth the Dutchman. Is not ‘veal’ a calf?”

“Veal” is the English word “well” pronounced with a Dutch accent.

Katherine’s last word before “veal” had been “long”: “long veal.” She was playing with the name “Longaville.”

A calf is a fool. She was calling Longaville a fool and so was teasing him.

“A calf, fair lady!” Longaville said.

“No, a fair lord calf,” Katherine replied.

“Let’s part the word.”

Parting the word “calf” gave “ca” and “lf.” Katherine’s name began with the hard-c “ca” sound, and the word “half” ended with “lf.”

Also, if they were to part the word, then half of the word would apply to both of them; half would be Katherine’s, and half would be Longaville’s. Longaville was saying, in other words, if I am a calf, aka fool, then so are you.

“No, I’ll not be your half,” Katherine replied.

She was saying that she did not want to be his better half, aka wife.

She added, “Take all, and wean it; it may prove to be an ox.”

An ox is a castrated bull.

Longaville said, "Look how you butt yourself in these sharp mocks. Will you give horns, chaste lady? Do not do that."

If Katherine were to give horns after she was married, she would be giving her husband horns — that is, she would make him a cuckold. If she were to do that, she would be butting herself — acting in such a way that would get her a bad reputation. And by being insulting to Longaville right now, she risked getting a reputation as a shrew.

Katherine said, "Then die while you are still a calf, before your horns grow."

"Give me one word in private with you, before I die," Longaville said.

"Bleat softly then," Katherine said. "The butcher hears you cry."

Longaville and Katherine withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Boyet, who had heard Katherine teasing Longaville and who had heard all the "Russian" men being verbally mocked by the ladies, said, "The tongues of mocking wenches are as sharp and keen as is the razor's invisible edge, cutting a smaller hair than may be seen, above the sense of sense — beyond the ability of the senses to perceive — so sensible seems their conversation. Their witticisms have wings fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, and swifter things."

"Not one word more, my maids," Rosaline said. "Break off all conversation, break it off."

"By Heaven, we are all dry-beaten with pure scoff and mockery!" Biron said.

To be "dry-beaten" was to be thoroughly beaten but without the shedding of blood. This had been a verbal battle that the ladies had decisively won; it had not been a physical battle.

"Farewell, mad wenches," a greatly disappointed King Ferdinand said. "You have simple — foolish and unsophisticated — wits."

"Twenty adieus, my Muscovites of the frozen north," the Princess said.

King Ferdinand, the lords, and the black musicians departed.

The Princess said, "Are these the breeds of wits that are so admired?"

Boyet said, "They are candles, and your sweet breaths have blown them out."

"Well-liking wits they have," Rosaline said. "They are gross, gross; they are fat, fat."

In other words, she was saying that the "visiting Russians" — the lords — are fatheads. "Well-liking" meant "liking well" — metaphorically, the brains of the "visiting Russians" liked well their food, which made them fat and dulled their wit.

"Oh, poverty in wit, Kingly-poor flout!" the Princess said, thinking of King Ferdinand's insult that the ladies had simple — foolish and unsophisticated — wits. His jeer was unworthy of a King; if Kings must insult, they should be wittier than King Ferdinand had shown himself to be.

The Princess asked, "Do you think that they will hang themselves tonight? Or ever, except while wearing masks, show their faces? This pert, cheeky Biron was quite out of countenance. He was quite disconcerted."

“Oh, they were all in lamentable cases!” Rosaline said.

“Cases” meant both “conditions” and “masks.”

She added, “The King was ready to weep because he so much wanted a good word, which he did not get.”

The Princess said, “Biron did swear himself out of all suit. He began to swear and ceased to woo.”

“Dumain was at my service,” Maria said, “and his sword was, too. ‘*Non point*,’ said I, and my servant immediately was mute.”

“*Non point*” was French for “No point,” which has two meanings.

Katherine said, “Lord Longaville said that I overcame his heart; and do you know what he called me?”

“Qualm, perhaps,” the Princess said.

Longaville may have felt that she had conquered his heart, but after being insulted by her, he probably felt a qualm — a sudden attack of sickness — that came over him and affected his heart.

“Yes, indeed,” Katherine said.

“Go, sickness that you are!” the Princess said. “Ha!”

She was joking that since Katherine was “ill,” she should leave.

The ladies were not amused by the wit of the men.

Rosaline said, “Well, better wits — more intelligent and wittier men — have worn plain statute-caps.”

By statute, people of low status, such as apprentices, had to wear simple woolen caps on certain days.

Rosaline said, “But will you listen to this? The King is my sworn love.”

“And quick and lively Biron has pledged his faith to me,” the Princess said.

“And Longaville was born to be my servant,” Katherine said.

“Dumain is mine, as surely as bark is on trees,” Maria said.

“Madam, and pretty mistresses, listen to me,” Boyet said. “Quickly they will again be here as their own selves, with no disguises, for it can never be that they will swallow and digest this harsh indignity. They cannot endure such rejection and will return here to try to improve their reception by you.”

“Will they return here?” the Princess asked.

“They will, they will, God knows,” Boyet said, “and they will leap for joy, although they are lame with blows. Therefore exchange the favors; and, when they return, blow like sweet roses in this summer air.”

“By “blow,” Boyet meant “burst into blossom.”

The Princess, not understanding, asked, “How blow? How blow? What does that mean? Speak in such a way that I can understand you.”

Boyet said, “Fair ladies masked are roses in their bud. Dismasked, their damask — deep pink — sweet commixture of red and white shown, are angels moving aside clouds and becoming visible, or roses blown in full flower.”

“Avaunt, perplexity!” the Princess said. “Away, riddling words!”

She preferred a more easily understood way of speaking.

She asked, “What shall we do, if they return as themselves to woo us?”

Rosaline replied, “Good madam, if by me you’ll be advised, let’s continue to mock them; we can do that as well when they are not disguised as when they are disguised. Let us complain to them what fools were here, disguised like Muscovites, in unshapely clothing, and wonder who they were and to what end their shallow spectacles and their vilely penned, badly written prologue, and their rough and ridiculous way of bearing themselves was presented at our tent to us.”

Seeing the lords, now undisguised, returning, Boyet said, “Ladies, withdraw. The gallants are at hand.”

“Dash to our tents, as quickly as deer run over land,” the Princess said.

The ladies — the Princess, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine — ran to their tents.

King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, now wearing their usual clothing and no disguises, walked over to Boyet.

King Ferdinand asked him, “Fair sir, God save you! Where’s the Princess?”

“Gone to her tent,” Boyet replied, “Will it please your majesty to command me to do any service to her thither? Do you want me to take a message to her?”

“Say that I would like for her to permit me to speak to her one word,” King Ferdinand said.

“I will,” Boyet said, “and she will listen to you, I know, my lord.”

Boyet left to perform his errand.

In a bad mood, Biron criticized Boyet:

“This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons peck up peas, and utters it again when God does please. He is wit’s peddler, and he retails his wares at wakes and drunken wassails, meetings, markets, and fairs; and we who sell wit by the gross, the Lord knows, don’t have the grace to grace it with such a show as Boyet.

“This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve. If he had been Adam, he would have tempted Eve, instead of Eve tempting Adam in the Garden of Eden.

“He can carve meat at the table, too, and lisp and speak in an affected manner. Why, this is he who kissed his hand away in courtesy.”

In some social situations in this society, a gentleman would kiss his own hand.

Biron continued, “This man is the ape of form, the imitator of those with good etiquette, he is Monsieur the Nice, and so it is the case that when he plays at backgammon, he chides the dice using honorable — not swear — words.

“He can sing a middle-range — neither high nor low — part in a song quite respectfully, and when it comes to performing the duties of a gentleman usher, no one can beat him.

“The ladies call him sweet, and the stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet.

“This is the flower that smiles on everyone in order to show that his teeth are as white as a walrus’ tusk.

“And consciences, that will not die in debt, pay him the due of calling him ‘honey-tongued Boyet.’”

King Ferdinand said, “I say with my heart that I wish there were a blister on his sweet tongue, because he is the man who disconcerted Mote, Armado’s page, so much that he could not say his part!”

Seeing Boyet returning, Biron said, “See where it comes! Courteous behavior, what were you until this madman showed you? And what are you now?”

Boyet ushered the Princess, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine into the presence of the lords.

King Ferdinand said to the Princess, “All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!”

By “hail,” King Ferdinand meant “greetings,” but the Princess deliberately misinterpreted “hail” to refer to the principal ingredient in a hailstorm, which is foul weather, not fair weather.

She said, “‘Fair’ in ‘all hail’ is foul, I believe. Don’t call a hailstorm fair.”

King Ferdinand, who knew that she was deliberately misinterpreting his words, said, “Construe my speeches better, if you may.”

“Then give me better wishes,” the Princess said. “I give you permission to do that.”

“We came to visit you,” King Ferdinand said, “and we intend now to lead you to our court; please give us permission to do so.”

“This field shall hold me; and so you will hold and keep your vow. Neither God, nor I, delights in perjured men.”

“Don’t rebuke me for that which you yourself provoke,” King Ferdinand said. “The virtue of your eye makes me break my oath.”

By “virtue,” King Ferdinand meant “power,” but again the Princess deliberately misinterpreted him.

She replied, “You misname the word ‘virtue’; ‘vice’ is the word you should have spoken, for virtue’s operation never breaks men’s good faith.

“Now by my maiden honor, yet as pure as the unsullied lily, I protest that even though I would endure a world of torments, I would not yield to be a guest in your house, so much I hate to be

a cause of breaking any Heavenly oaths that have been vowed with integrity.”

King Ferdinand said, “Oh, you have lived in desolation here, unseen, unvisited, much to our shame.”

“Not so, my lord,” the Princess replied, “It is not so, I swear. We have had pastimes here and pleasant entertainment. A mess — a group of four — of Russians left us only recently.”

“What, madam! Russians!” King Ferdinand said, pretending to be surprised.

“Yes, indeed, my lord. They were trim gallants, full of courtship — courtliness and courting — and of stateliness.”

“Madam, tell the truth,” Rosaline said, preparing to criticize the Russians and therefore the lords. “What she said is not so, my lord. My lady, in accordance with the good manners of these days, out of courtesy gives the Russians undeserved praise.

“We four ladies were indeed confronted with four men wearing Russian clothing. Here they stayed an hour, and talked apace — quickly — and during that hour, my lord, they did not bless us with one happy, well-chosen, felicitous word.

“I dare not call them fools; but this I think, when fools are thirsty, fools would like to have a drink. I don’t think these Russians know enough to do that.”

“This jest is dry to me,” Biron said to Rosaline.

Of course, he did not think that the Russians were fools.

Biron continued, “Fair gentle sweet, your wit makes wise things foolish. When we greet, with eyes best seeing, Heaven’s fiery eye, by light we lose light — the Sun blinds us. Your capacity — your intellect — is of that nature that compared to your huge store of intelligence, wise things seem foolish and rich things seem to be poor.”

Rosaline replied, “This proves you to be wise and rich, for in my eye —”

Biron finished the joke for her: “— I am a fool, and full of poverty. And if you think that of me, then according to what I said, I am wise and I am full of wealth.”

Rosaline said, “Make sure that you take only what belongs to you; it is a fault to snatch words from my tongue.”

Biron publicly confessed his love for her: “Oh, I am yours, and all that I possess!”

“All the fool is mine?” Rosaline asked.

“I cannot give you less,” Biron said.

“Which of the visors was it that you wore?” she asked him.

Disconcerted, Biron said, “Where? When? What visor? Why do you ask me this?”

Rosaline replied, “Where? There. When? Then. What visor? That superfluous, unnecessary visor that hid the worse and showed the better face.”

Realizing immediately that ladies knew that they, the lords, had been disguised as the visiting Russians, King Ferdinand said, “We have been detected; they’ll mock us now without pity.”

Dumain said, "Let us confess and say it was a jest."

"Dumbfounded, my lord?" the Princess asked King Ferdinand. "Why does your highness look sad?"

Rosaline cried, "Help, hold his brows! He'll faint!"

She said to Biron, "Why do you look so pale? You are sea-sick, I think, having come from Moscow."

Biron said to Rosaline, "Thus the stars pour down plagues for perjury. We are being punished for violating our oath. Can any face of brass brazen it out any longer?"

"Here stand I, lady, dart your skill at me — shoot your verbal weapons at me. Bruise me with scorn, confound me with a jeer, thrust your sharp wit quite through my ignorance, cut me to pieces with your keen, sharp intellect, and I will never more ask you to dance, nor will I ever again in Russian clothing try to be your servant.

"Oh, I will never trust to prewritten speeches, nor to the motion of a schoolboy's — Mote's — tongue, nor ever come in a disguise to my loved one, nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song!"

People with handicaps such as blindness sometimes played musical instruments to make a living.

Biron continued to reject ways of wooing that were affected:

"Fancy taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, three-layered hyperboles, spruce affectation, pedantic figures of speech — these summer-flies have filled me full of maggoty ostentation. I forswear them."

Biron now vowed to woo in a different way, one more honest and less affected:

"I here protest, by this, Rosaline's white glove — how white the hand is, God knows! — that henceforth my wooing mind shall be expressed in russet yeas and honest kersey noes. I will speak simply and understandably: I will say yes, and I will say no. My language will be plainspoken, like the plain russet and kersey clothing worn by people who don't wear fancy clothing.

"And, to begin, wench — so God help me, la! — my love for you is sound, *sans* crack or flaw."

Biron had begun to immediately implement his new way of wooing. He would use no love-poetry terms, not now, although his speech would still profess love for Rosaline. She was no longer a goddess; he affectionately called her a wench. And he used the homespun interjection "la," rather than a fancy word. But he did make one mistake, which Rosaline immediately identified: He used the French word "*sans*," which means "without."

She said, "Talk to me sans '*sans*,' please."

He replied, "I still have a touch of the old madness. Bear with me, I am sick; I'll leave my old madness behind by degrees.

“Wait, let us see. Write, ‘Lord have mercy on us,’ on those three — King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain — they are infected with the same madness; in their hearts it lies; they have the plague, and they caught it from the eyes of you ladies. These lords have been visited with sickness; you are not free, for the Lord’s tokens on you I do see.”

The sentence “Lord have mercy on us” was written on the doors of houses in which were people infected with the plague.

Many people in this society believed that the plague was a visitation of the wrath of God.

The lords were all infected with love madness, and Biron joked that ladies were not free of that plague. “The Lord’s tokens” were physical signs of being infected with the plague, and of course, “the lords’ tokens” were the love-tokens the lords had given the ladies and that the ladies were now wearing.

The Princess replied, “No, they are free who gave these tokens to us.”

By “free,” she meant “generous.”

Biron said, “Our states are forfeit: Seek not to undo us.”

One meaning of his sentence was this: “Our estates are forfeited and subject to confiscation: Seek not to ruin us.”

Another meaning of his sentence was this: “We have forfeited much of our honor through our silly actions: Seek not to disconcert us more by continuing to mock us.”

Rosaline said, “It can’t be true that you are forfeit, for how can it be true that you are forfeit, since you are those who sue?”

The lords were suing — begging — the ladies for their love. They were suitors pleading for love.

Biron said, “Peace! Quiet! For I will not have to do with you.”

This meant both “I won’t have anything to do with you” and “I won’t have sex with you.” Biron was discouraged.

“Nor shall you not if I do as I intend,” Rosaline replied. She was unwilling to have sex with him at this time. But the double negative hinted that perhaps at some time she would be willing.

Biron said to the other lords, “Speak for yourselves; my wit is at an end. I have nothing more to say.”

King Ferdinand asked the Princess, “Teach us, sweet madam, for our rude transgression some fair excuse. Tell us how we can excuse and make up for what we have done.”

“The fairest way is confession,” she replied.

Giving him an opportunity to confess, she asked, “Weren’t you here — disguised — just a short while ago?”

“Madam, I was,” King Ferdinand admitted.

“And were you in your right mind?”

“I was, fair madam.”

“When you then were here, what did you whisper in your lady’s ear?” the Princess asked.

“That more than all the world I did respect and value her.”

“When she shall challenge this and say that you did not say that to her, you will reject her,” the Princess said.

“Upon my honor, no,” King Ferdinand replied. “I swear upon my honor.”

“Peace! Be quiet! Don’t! Having already broken your oath once, you won’t hesitate to break it again.”

The first oath King Ferdinand had broken was to stay from women for three years.

“Despise me, when I break this oath of mine,” King Ferdinand said.

“I will,” the Princess said to the King, “and therefore keep your oath.”

The Princess then asked, “Rosaline, what did the Russian whisper in your ear?”

She replied, “Madam, he swore that he did regard me as dear as precious eyesight, and he did value me more than all this world, and he added to all this that he would wed me, or else he would die my lover.”

“May God give you joy of him!” the Princess said. “I hope that you two will be happy together! The noble King Ferdinand will very honorably uphold his word — he will do what he swore to do.”

King Ferdinand objected, “What do you mean, madam? By my life, by my truth and honor, I swear that I never swore to this lady such an oath. I never said that I loved her and would marry her.”

“By Heaven, I swear you did,” Rosaline said, “and to plainly confirm it, look at this.”

She held up a small love token — not the pendant the King had previously given to the Princess — and said, “You gave me this, but take it, sir, back again.”

King Ferdinand said, “I gave both my faithful love and this love token to the Princess. I knew who she was by the jewel she was wearing on her sleeve.”

The jewel was the pendant depicting a lady with a border made of diamonds. One meaning of “jewel” is “precious thing.”

“Pardon me, sir,” the Princess said. “Rosaline was wearing this jewel. And Lord Biron, I thank him, is my dear lover.”

She asked Biron, “Will you have me, or your pearl, again?”

Biron’s love token to Rosaline was a pearl. One meaning of “pearl” is “precious thing.”

Biron replied, “I want nothing to do with either. I give up both of them.”

“I see the trick that was played on us. Here there was an agreement, a plot. You knew ahead of time about the merriment we had planned — to dress up like Russians — and you plotted to spoil it like you would a Christmas comedy — many people jeer at actors.

“Some carry-tale, some gossip, some please-man, some yes-man, some slight zany, some lightweight comic servant, some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some person who conquers large meals, some common Dick, some person who smiles his cheeks into wrinkles and knows that the trick is to make my lady laugh when she’s disposed to laugh, told you ladies beforehand what we intended to do.

“Once that was disclosed, you ladies exchanged favors and put on masks, and then we lords, following the signs of the love tokens, wooed just the sign — not the substance — of whichever woman we loved. We pledged our love not to the woman we loved, but to the woman whom we thought was the woman we loved.

“Now, to add more terror to our original perjury, we are again forsworn, in will and error.

“That is pretty much what happened.”

Biron knew who was the tattletale. He had already criticized Boyet as an affected dandy who kept ladies entertained.

He said to Boyet, “And aren’t you the one who ruined our sport and made us thus untrue to our vows?”

“Don’t you know my lady’s foot by the squire — uh, square? Don’t you have her measure? Don’t you know how to please her?”

A square is a measuring instrument. “My lady” was a generic term for an upper-class woman. As a ladies’ man, Boyet had my lady’s measure, and he knew how to please her and how to squire — escort — her. The Princess, and especially Rosaline, could easily have thought that “my lady” referred to her, but they ignored that interpretation.

The word “foot” was similar to the French word “*foutre*,” which means “fuck.”

Biron continued, “Don’t you laugh upon the apple — the pupil — of her eye? Don’t you keep her entertained so that you can be at the center of her attention? Don’t you laugh with her at the things she likes to laugh at?”

One meaning of the word “eye” was “vagina.” Biron was saying that Boyet laughed as he had vaginal sex.

Biron had used the words “squire” and “apple.” In this society, “an apple-squire” meant “a pimp.”

Biron continued, “Don’t you stand between her back, sir, and the fire, holding a trencher, and jesting merrily?”

One meaning of what Biron had said was that Boyet acted as a fire screen and kept my lady from getting too hot as she faced away from him.

Another meaning involved “stand” as “erection” and “fire” as “vagina.” With that meaning, Boyet stood behind my lady and put his “stand” in the hole between the woman’s “fire” and

her back. Often, the word “trencher” means “plate,” but it can also mean “knife.” Here, the trencher was a phallic symbol. One meaning of “to jest” is “to amuse oneself and others.”

Biron continued, “You put our page — Mote — out of countenance.

“Go on and mock me, you are allowed. You are a fool, and licensed fools are allowed to say whatever they want.

“Die whenever you will, a smock — a petticoat — shall be your shroud. You shall be buried like the woman you are.”

In this society, the word “die” also meant “have an orgasm.” Biron was also saying that Boyet had sex while wearing women’s clothing.

Boyet smiled derisively at Biron, who said, “You leer upon me, do you? There’s an eye that wounds like a leaden sword.”

A leaden sword was not a real sword; it was a property sword — one used in theatrical productions. (Wooden swords were also used as stage props.) It was also another phallic symbol. *Vagina* is Latin for “sheath” — a good place to put a sword.

Boyet replied, “Very merrily has this brave manage, this career, this gallop of words at full speed, been run.”

Biron said, “Lo, he is tilting straight! Peace! I have done. Quiet! I have finished!”

One meaning of “tilting straight” is “immediately going back to his encounters (of wit).”

Another meaning of “tilting straight” is “immediately going back to thrusting (with his penis).”

Costard walked over to the group.

Biron said to Costard, “Welcome, pure wit! You have stopped a fair fray — a good fight.”

Costard said, “Oh, Lord, sir, they want to know whether the three Worthies shall come in or not.”

“Are there only three?”

“No, sir; but it is *vara fine*, for every one pursents three.”

“*Vara*” was a dialect word meaning “very,” and “pursents” meant a combination of “presents” and “represents.”

Costard was saying that each of the three people would appear as three different Worthies.

People who know arithmetic would deduce there would be nine — the normal number — Worthies in all.

Biron said, “And three times thrice is nine.”

Costard objected, “Not so, sir; let me correct you, sir; I hope it is not so.

“You cannot beg us, sir. I can assure you, sir, that we know what we know.”

By “you cannot beg us,” Costard meant that he was not a fool. Sometimes an incompetent person would inherit money and property, and that person’s relatives would beg the law court to be appointed guardians of the fool so they could manage that fool’s money and possessions. “To beg a fool” meant “to petition the Court of Wards to get custody of an incompetent person.” “To beg someone for a fool” meant “to take that person for a fool.”

One way of testing a person’s competence was to ask that person to do simple arithmetic.

Costard continued, “I hope, sir, three times thrice, sir —”

Biron interrupted, “— is not nine?”

Costard replied, “Let me correct you, sir. We know to how much it does amount.”

Biron said, “By Jove, I always took three threes for nine.”

“Oh, Lord, sir, it would be a pity if you would have to get your living by reckoning, sir,” Costard said.

“How much is it?” Biron asked.

“Oh, Lord, sir, the parties themselves, the actors, sir, will show to how much it does amount. As for my own part, I am, as they say, but to perfect one man in one poor man, Pompion the Great, sir.”

“Parfect” was a combination of “present” and “perfect.” Costard was supposed to be word-perfect as he presented Pompion the Great.

Costard had said that each of three men would present three Worthies. Perhaps only one of the Worthies Costard was to present was a speaking part. But actually he was wrong about the number of people presenting the Worthies: Five people presented the first five Worthies.

By “Pompion the Great,” Costard meant Pompey the Great, a military and political leader of the late Roman Republic. Pompey first cooperated with and then opposed Julius Caesar, who triumphed over him.

In this society, a “pompion” was a pumpkin.

Biron asked, “Are you one of the Worthies?”

Costard replied, “It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompion the Great. As for my own part, I know not the rank of the Worthy, but I am to stand for and represent him.”

Biron said, “Go, tell them to get ready to present the Worthies.”

“We will turn it finely off, sir,” Costard said. “We will take some care. We will skillfully perform the Worthies.”

King Ferdinand said, “Biron, they will shame us with a bad performance. Let them not perform the Nine Worthies.”

“We are shame-proof, my lord,” Biron said. “We cannot be shamed any more than we already have, and it is a wise move to have now performed a worse show than the one already performed by the King and his company.”

“I say they shall not come here and present the Nine Worthies,” King Ferdinand said.

“No, my good lord, let me overrule you now,” the Princess said. “That sport best pleases that does least know how to please — where zeal strives to content and please, and the content of the play dies in the zeal of those who present it.”

Performers can be so determined to make the audience approve of their performance that their overacting ruins their performance. Nevertheless, the audience can be amused by the overacting.

The Princess continued, “Their form confounded makes most form in mirth, when great things laboring perish in their birth.”

She meant that much humor can be found when a great enterprise goes badly wrong.

Biron said to King Ferdinand, “That is a good description of our sport, my lord. The ladies found much humor in our pretending to be Russians.”

Don Adriana de Armado walked over to the group and said to King Ferdinand, who at his coronation had been anointed with holy oil, “Anointed, I implore so much expense of your royal sweet breath as will utter a brace of words.”

A brace of words is a pair of words. In other words, Armado wanted a short private conversation with the King. The two men went aside and talked together. Costard gave King Ferdinand a paper.

The Princess asked Biron, “Does this man serve God?”

“Why do you ask?”

“He does not speak like a man whom God made,” the Princess replied.

Indeed, Armado did not speak like an ordinary human being.

Armado said to King Ferdinand, “That is all one, my fair, sweet, honey monarch; for, I protest, the schoolmaster is exceedingly fantastical; he is too, too vain, too, too vain, but we will put it, as they say, to *fortuna de la guerra*. I wish you the peace of mind, most royal couplement!”

The King had expressed some worries about the presentation of the Nine Worthies, but Armado tried to reassure him and also said that they should leave it up to the *fortuna de la guerra* — the fortunes of war. The most royal couplement was the most royal couple: the King and the Princess.

Armado exited.

King Ferdinand said, “Here is likely to be a good company of Worthies. Armado will represent Hector of Troy. The country swain Costard will represent Pompey the Great. The parish curate Sir Nathaniel will represent Alexander the Great. Armado’s page, Mote, will represent Hercules. The pedant, Holofernes, will represent Judas Maccabaeus.

“And if these four Worthies in their first show thrive, these four will change habits, and present the other five.”

Biron objected, “There are five Worthies in the first show.”

“You are deceived,” King Ferdinand said. “That is not so.”

He had miscounted, or he was saying that these five people were unworthy and incapable of presenting five Worthies.

Biron pointed out, “The pedant Holofernes, the braggart Armado, the hedge-priest Sir Nathaniel, the fool Costard, and the boy Mote — apart from a throw in the dice game *novum*, the whole world cannot again pick out five such, take each one in his vein, aka take each one for what he is.”

A hedge-priest is an uneducated priest.

In the game of *novum*, throws of five and nine are significant.

Seeing Costard approaching, King Ferdinand said, “The ship is under sail, and here she comes amain — at full speed.”

Costard, dressed as Pompey the Great, said, “I am Pompey —”

Unfortunately, he tripped and fell on the ground.

Boyet punned, “You lie, you are not he.”

Costard said again, “I am Pompey —”

Boyet said, “With a leopard’s head on your knee.”

In this society, people honored ancient heroes by ascribing to them coats of arms. Pompey’s “coat of arms” included a leopard’s head. Costard was carrying a prop shield on which was a leopard’s head; Costard was resting the shield on his knee.

Biron complimented Boyet, “Well said, old mocker. I must become friends with you.”

Costard said, “I am Pompey, Pompey surnamed the Big —”

Dumain corrected him: “The Great.”

Costard said, “You are correct. It is ‘Great,’ sir. I am Pompey surnamed the Great, who often on the battlefield, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat.”

A targe is a light shield.

Costard continued, “And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance, and lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.

“If your ladyship would say, ‘Thanks, Pompey,’ I have finished my part.”

The Princess of France said, “Great thanks, great Pompey.”

Costard said, “My performance was not worth so much, but I hope I was word-perfect. I did make a little mistake in ‘Great.’”

Biron said, “I bet my hat against a halfpenny that Pompey proves to be the best Worthy.”

This was not much of a compliment. Biron was saying the other performances of Worthies would be worse than Costard’s performance of Pompey.

Sir Nathaniel, costumed as Alexander the Great, stepped forward and said, “When in the world I lived, I was the world’s commander. By east, west, north, and south, I spread my conquering might. My scutcheon plainly declares that I am Alisander —”

A scutcheon is an escutcheon — a painted shield.

Boyet interrupted, “Your nose says no, you are not Alexander the Great, because your nose stands too straight.”

Alexander the Great, conqueror of the known world, had a habit of holding his head at an angle. He also was reputed to have had an aquiline nose — one that is hooked or curved. Boyet could also have had in mind the story that Caesar Augustus once visited the preserved corpse of Alexander. Bending down to kiss Alexander’s forehead, Caesar Augustus accidentally broke Alexander’s nose.

Biron said to Boyet, “Your nose smells ‘no’ in this, most tender-smelling knight.”

Alexander the Great’s body and breath were said to smell sweet; Biron was saying that Boyet’s nose could tell that Sir Nathaniel’s body and breath did not smell sweet.

The Princess said, “The conqueror is dismayed. Proceed, good Alexander.”

Sir Nathaniel said, “When in the world I lived, I was the world’s commander —”

Boyet said, “Most true, that is right; you were so, Alisander.”

Biron said to Costard, “Pompey the Great —”

Costard replied, “I am your servant, as is Costard.”

Biron said, “Take away the conqueror; take away Alisander.”

Costard said to Sir Nathaniel, “Oh, sir, you have overthrown Alisander the conqueror! You will be scraped out of the painted cloth for this.”

Painted cloths were decorative wall hangings, many of which depicted the Nine Worthies. Because of Sir Nathaniel’s poor performance, Alexander the Great was in danger of having his image removed from these painted wall hangings.

Costard continued, “Your lion, that holds his pole-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax the Great: he will be the ninth Worthy.”

The coat of arms ascribed to Alexander the Great depicted a lion seated on a throne and holding a battle-ax. Costard got part of this wrong: He said the lion was seated on a close-stool — a toilet.

Ajax the Great was a Greek warrior who was second only to Achilles in the Trojan War. Ajax’ name, unfortunately, was pronounced much like “a jakes” — “jakes” is an archaic word for “toilet.”

Sir Nathaniel was unable to speak, probably because he was disconcerted.

Costard said, “A conqueror, and afraid to speak! Run away for shame, Alisander!”

Sir Nathaniel stepped to the side.

Costard said, “There, if it shall please you, is a foolish mild man. He is an honest man, you see, and soon dashed.”

“Dashed” meant “abashed.”

Costard continued, “He is a marvelous good neighbor, indeed, and a very good bowler in the game of bowls, but as for the part of Alisander — alas, you see how it is — he is a little overparted. He does not quite measure up to the part. But there are Worthies a-coming who will speak their mind in some other sort.”

Holofernes stepped forward, costumed as Judas Maccabaeus, the Hebrew warrior. Mote also stepped forward, costumed as the young Hercules.

Holofernes said, “Great Hercules is presented by this imp, whose club killed Cerberus, that three-headed *canus*, and when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp, thus did he strangle serpents in his *manus*.”

“*Manus*” is Latin for “hands”; “*canis*,” not “*canus*,” is Latin for “dog.” Either Holofernes wanted the word to rhyme with “*manus*,” or he had made a mistake in his Latin.

Holofernes continued, “*Quoniam* he seems to be in minority, *ergo* I come with this apology.”

“*Quoniam*” is Latin for “since”; “*ergo*” is Latin for “therefore.” By “in minority,” Holofernes meant “a child, a minor.” An apology is an explanation; Holofernes was explaining why a minor was presenting Hercules.

Holofernes said to Mote, “Keep some state — stateliness — in thy exit, and vanish.”

Mote stepped to the side.

Holofernes said, “I am Judas —”

Dumain said, “A Judas!”

Holofernes said, “Not Judas Iscariot, sir, not the betrayer of Jesus Christ. Judas I am, yclept Maccabaeus.”

“Yclept” is an archaic word meaning “called.”

Dumain said, “Judas Maccabaeus clipped is plain Judas.”

“Clipped” can mean “abbreviated” or “embraced.”

Biron said, “A kissing traitor.”

Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus by embracing and kissing him. This identified Jesus to the people who arrested him.

Biron then asked Holofernes, “How can you prove that you are Judas?”

Holofernes said, “I am Judas —”

“The more shame for you, Judas,” Dumain said.

“What do you intend by saying that, sir?” Holofernes said.

Boyet said, "To make Judas hang himself."

Holofernes said, "You go first, sir. You are my elder."

Biron said, "That's a good comeback. Judas was hanged on an elder tree."

With dignity, Holofernes said, "I will not be put out of countenance."

Biron replied, "Because you have no face."

Holofernes pointed to his face and asked, "What is this?"

Unfortunately for him, this provided an opportunity for some male audience members to insult him.

Boyet said, "It is a cittern-head."

A cittern was a musical instrument that resembled a guitar. Its head was often carved into a grotesque face and head.

Dumain said, "It is the head of a bodkin."

A bodkin was a ladies' hairpin; the head of the hairpin was often decorated.

Biron said, "It is a Death's face — a skull — in a ring."

Longaville said, "It is the face on an old Roman coin, scarcely able to be seen because it is so worn."

Boyet said, "It is the pommel of Caesar's falchion. It is the carved hilt of Caesar's sword."

Dumain said, "It is the carved-bone face on a gunpowder flask made of bone."

Biron said, "It is Saint George's half-cheek portrait — his profile — carved on a brooch."

Dumain said, "Yes, a brooch made of lead."

Such a brooch was inexpensive compared to other brooches. Tradesmen advertised their trade with a brooch worn in their hat.

Biron said, "Yes, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer."

A tooth-drawer was a primitive dentist. Such a job was low-status, and so the dentist advertised who he was with a less-expensive brooch than other tradesmen wore in their hats.

Biron said to Holofernes, "And now forward, for we have put you in countenance."

One meaning of "put you in countenance" was "encouraged you."

Holofernes replied, "You have put me out of countenance. You have disconcerted me."

Biron said, "False; we have given you faces."

Another meaning of "put you in countenance" was "have given you a face or faces."

Holofernes said, "But you have out-faced them all."

"To out-face" means "to mock" or "to put to shame."

Biron said, "Even if you were a lion, we would do so."

Boyet said, "Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go. And so adieu, sweet Jude! Why does he stay and not leave?"

Dumain said, "He is waiting for the latter end of his name."

The latter part of the name "Judas" is "ass."

Biron said, "For the ass to the Jude; give it to him — Jude-ass, away!"

He was thinking of the fable by Aesop in which an ass finds a lion skin that huntsmen are drying. The ass wears the lion skin, and all the animals are afraid when they see him until the ass brays with pleasure and so reveals that he is only an ass.

With dignity, Holofernes said, "This is not generous, not gentle, not humble."

In other words, the way you are acting is not nobly minded, not well bred, not considerate. He was accusing the lords of lacking proper etiquette and of not behaving like gentlemen.

Holofernes was correct. Boyet, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain were behaving badly.

The ladies and King Ferdinand had not joined in the mocking.

Boyet said, "A light for Monsieur Judas! It grows dark, he may stumble."

The light Biron referred to was a Judas candlestick. It had places for seven candles, but one "candle," which was made of wood and painted to resemble a candle, was called the Judas candle.

Holofernes stepped to the side.

The Princess said, "Alas, poor Maccabaeus, how he has been tormented!"

Don Adriano de Armado, costumed as Hector, stepped forward.

Biron said, "Hide your head, Achilles. Here comes Hector in arms."

Achilles was the foremost Greek warrior in the Trojan War, and Hector was the foremost Trojan warrior.

Dumain said, "Though my mocks rebound against me, I will now be merry."

King Ferdinand said, "Hector was but an ordinary Trojan, not a Trojan hero, in comparison to this man, Armado."

In this society, the word "Trojan" also meant "drinking buddy."

Boyet asked, "But is this Hector?"

King Ferdinand said, "I think Hector was not so well-built."

Possibly, King Ferdinand was trying to be genuinely complimentary as a result of the earlier mocking of Holofernes. If so, it backfired, for the other lords continued to be mocking.

Longaville said, "His leg is too big for Hector's."

Dumain said, "More calf, certainly."

In other words, Armado was more of a fool — a calf — than was Hector.

Boyet said, "No; he is best endowed in the small."

The small is the part of the leg under the calf. Boyet was saying that Armado was endowed with small things; great things belonged to the hero Hector.

Biron said, "This cannot be Hector."

Dumain said, "He's a god or a painter, for he makes faces."

Armado said, "The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty, gave Hector a gift —"

"Armipotent" meant "powerful in the use of arms, aka weapons."

Dumain named a gift: "A gilt nutmeg."

A gilt nutmeg was a nutmeg that had been brushed with egg yolk. Such gifts were used to flavor drinks. They were also lovers' gifts.

Other members of the audience named possible gifts.

Biron said, "A lemon."

Longaville said, "A lemon stuck with cloves."

Lemons and cloves were also used to spice drinks.

Dumain said, "No, a cloven lemon."

He was punning. A "leman" is a sweetheart, and a cloven leman/lemon is metaphorically a vulva.

Armado said, "Peace! Quiet! The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty, gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion."

If the gift that the war-god Mars gave Hector was an heir, then Mars cuckolded Hector.

"Ilion" was another name for "Troy."

Armado continued, "Hector was a man so strong-winded, that certainly he would fight; yes, from morning until night, out of his pavilion. I am that flower —"

Members of the audience began to name flowers.

Dumain said, "That mint."

Longaville said, "That columbine."

Mint and columbine are common, not exotic and valuable, flowers.

Armado said, "Sweet Lord Longaville, rein your tongue."

Longaville said, "I must rather give it free rein, for it runs against Hector."

Dumain said, "Yes, and Hector's a greyhound."

Some dogs were named Hector. In addition, Hector was famous for losing heart and running away from Achilles. In Homer's *Iliad*, Hector ran three times around the walls of Troy before finally facing and fighting Achilles, who killed him.

Armado said, "The sweet war-man is dead and rotten; sweet chucks, beat not the bones of the buried. When he breathed, he was a man. But I will go forward with my device, with my performance."

"Chucks" meant "dear friends."

To the Princess, Armado said, "Sweet royalty, bestow on me the sense of hearing."

In other words, please give me the satisfaction of your listening to my performance (preferably without interruptions).

The Princess replied, "Speak, brave Hector. We are much delighted."

Armado said, "I do adore thy sweet grace's slipper."

Boyet whispered to Dumain, "He loves her by the foot —"

Dumain whispered back, "He may not by the yard."

In this society, "yard" was a slang word for "penis."

Armado said, "This Hector far surmounted Hannibal —"

By "surmounted," Armado meant "surpassed." Hannibal was a Carthaginian general who crossed the Alps and terrorized the Romans.

Armado continued, "The party is gone—"

This meant, the person is dead, aka Hector is dead.

In this society, the word "gone" also meant "pregnant."

Costard said, "The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone; she is two months on her way to giving birth."

Armado asked, "What meanest thou?"

Costard replied, "Truly, unless you play the honest Trojan, and do the right thing by marrying her, the poor wench is cast away. She's pregnant; the child brags in her belly already. Because it brags already, we know that it is yours."

Armado, and Spaniards in general, had a reputation for bragging.

Armado replied, "Dost thou infamonize me among potentates? Thou shalt die."

"Infamonize" meant "infamize, aka defame."

Costard said, "Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquenetta, who is pregnant by him, and hanged for Pompey, who is dead by him."

The usual punishment for fornication was whipping, and since Armado had threatened to kill Costard, who was playing Pompey, Armado would also be punished for murder.

Dumain said, “Most rare Pompey!”

Boyet said, “Renowned Pompey!”

Biron said, “Greater than great! Great, great, great Pompey! Pompey the Huge!”

Dumain said, “Hector trembles.”

Biron said, “Pompey is angry. More Ates, more Ates! Stir them on! Stir them on!”

Ate was the Roman goddess of strife and discord. Here Biron was using the word “Ate” metaphorically in the sense of additional exhortations for “Pompey” and “Hector” to fight.

Dumain said, “Hector will challenge him.”

Biron said, “Yes, he will, if he has no more man’s blood in his belly than will sup a flea. If he has even a little courage, he will challenge him to fight.”

Armado said to Costard, “By the north pole, I do challenge thee.”

Costard replied, “I will not fight with a pole, like a northern man. Instead, I’ll slash; I’ll do it by the sword. I betray you, let me borrow my arms again.”

He was referring to the weapons he had carried when he was front and center as he played Pompey. He wanted to use the stage weapons to fight Armado.

Dumain cried, “Make room for the incensed and angry Worthies!”

Costard said, “I’ll do it in my shirt.”

He was so eager to fight Armado that he would fight without armor.

Dumain cried, “Most resolute Pompey!”

Mote said, “Master, let me take you a buttonhole lower.”

One meaning of this was a request to Costard to allow Mote to help him take his jacket off. Another meaning was this: “Master, let me take you a peg lower.”

The idiom “take down a peg or two” means to “lower someone’s high opinion of himself.”

Armado resisted Mote’s attempt to remove his jacket.

Mote continued, “Do you not see that Pompey is uncasing — taking off some clothing — for the combat? What do you mean? You will lose your reputation.”

Armado said, “Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me; I will not combat — fight — in my shirt.”

“You may not deny it,” Dumain said. “Pompey has made the challenge. You must fight him.”

Actually, it was Armado who had challenged Costard, who had accepted the challenge.

“Sweet bloods, I both may and will deny the fight,” Armado said.

“What reason do you have for it?” Biron asked.

“The naked truth of it is, I have no shirt under my jacket,” Armado said. “I go woolward for penance.”

He meant that he allowed the itchy wool of his jacket to touch his naked skin as a form of penance.

Boyet said, "True, and it was enjoined him in Rome for want of linen."

In other words, yes, he does do this as a form of penance, but he is forced to because he has no shirt. Boyet was implying that Armado was too poverty stricken to have a shirt.

Boyet continued, "Since when, I'll be sworn, he wore nothing but a dishcloth of Jaquenetta's, and he wears that next to his heart for a favor, a love token."

Marcadé, one of the Princess' attendants, arrived and walked over to her and said, "God save you, madam!"

The Princess replied, "You are welcome, Marcadé, but you are interrupting our merriment."

Marcadé replied, "I am sorry, madam, for the news I bring is heavy on my tongue. The King your father —"

She knew immediately what had happened; her father had been very ill when she left France.

She said, "He is dead, for my life!"

"Yes," Marcadé said, "That is my news. My tale is told."

Marcadé's name seems to be related to Mercury, the name of the messenger of the gods. In addition, it can be split into mar-cade, or mar Arcadia. His news had ruined the happiness of King Ferdinand's park, which was usually a pleasant and quiet place of happiness like Arcadia.

"Worthies, away!" Biron ordered. "The scene begins to cloud."

Armado said, "As for mine own part, I breathe free breath."

He was happy that he had not had to fight. He was still a free man, and he was still breathing.

Armado continued, "I have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion, and I will right myself like a soldier."

Armado was thinking of two proverbs: 1) One may see day at a little hole, and 2) Discretion is the better part of valor.

The first proverb meant "I am no fool." Armado has seen the day of wrong. He is no fool; he can see that he has done wrong. That wrong was to make Jaquenetta pregnant without being married to her.

The second proverb meant "It is better to avoid danger than to confront it." Armado and Costard had been about to fight because of Jaquenetta, whom Costard loved first but whom Armado made pregnant. A wise man would remove the reason for the fight, thereby preventing future fights. How to do that? Armado could do the right thing and marry Jaquenetta. Once she is married, Costard will have no reason to fight for her.

What does "I will right myself like a soldier" mean? Armado has made it clear that he does not want to fight; however, he also wants to do the right thing to save his honor as a soldier. Armado has realized his misdeed, and like an honorable soldier, he will make amends. He will marry Jaquenetta.

The Worthies exited.

King Ferdinand asked her, “How fares your majesty? How are you?”

The Princess ordered, “Boyet, prepare everything. I will go away from here tonight.”

King Ferdinand requested, “Madam, do not leave tonight; I do beseech you, stay.”

The Princess said again to Boyet, “Prepare everything so we can leave tonight, I say.”

She then said to King Ferdinand and the other lords, “I thank you, gracious lords, for all your fair endeavors; and entreat, out of a newly sad soul, that you vouchsafe in your rich wisdom to excuse or ignore the liberal and unrestrained opposition of our spirits, if too boldly we have borne ourselves in the exchange of conversation. Your great courtesy and affability were responsible for our speaking so freely.

“Farewell, worthy lord! A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue. Excuse me, therefore, for coming too short of thanks for my great suit to you that was so easily obtained.”

The diplomatic mission the Princess had come on had been brought to a conclusion that was satisfactory to her.

King Ferdinand said, “The extreme end of time extremely forms all causes to the purpose of time’s speed, and often at time’s very loose decides that which long process could not arbitrate.”

The “loose” is the moment at which an archer releases, aka shoots, an arrow, and it flies away.

He meant that time as it slips quickly away forces things to come to an end point, and as a period of time comes to an end, it forces people to make decisions that would not be made so quickly if more time were available. Lack of time forces decisions to be made that could not be made even after long deliberation.

He had made a decision that concerned the Princess.

King Ferdinand continued, “And though the mourning brow of progeny forbids the smiling courtesy of love the holy suit that fain it would convince, yet, since love’s argument was first on foot, let not the cloud of sorrow jostle it from what it purposed; since, to wail friends and family lost is not by much so wholesome-profitable as to rejoice at friends — and family — but newly found.”

He meant that although the Princess was mourning the death of her father, and although that fact forbid a smiling man who loved her to propose to her a holy suit — the King meant marriage — that he wanted to propose to her, yet since the man who loved her had loved her before her father died, she ought not to allow her sorrow to keep the lover from his purpose — which in this case is to ask her to marry him. Why? Because to mourn the loss of family and friends is not by much as beneficial to well-being as it is to rejoice because of newly found family and friends.

If the Princess were to marry him, King Ferdinand would be a new member of her family.

The phrase “not by much” is ambiguous. It could mean “a little, not a lot” or “not by a whole lot.”

Once again, language proved to be slippery. Using the right words and putting them in the right order is often incredibly difficult. Understanding the sentences of other people is also often incredibly difficult.

Using archaic language in ordinary conversation is a mistake because it impedes understanding. People won't understand what you are saying.

Similarly, using archaic forms of wooing in a more modern time is a mistake because the woman the man is courting is likely to think that such wooing is a joke.

The Princess said, "I don't understand you. My griefs are double."

One grief was due to the death of her father; another grief was due to the death of her King.

But other people may have thought that her griefs were double because 1) She was mourning the loss of a loved one, and 2) She was mourning because she could not understand King Ferdinand.

Biron, who had recently learned the value of clear communication, tried to help, but he was still trying to learn to speak clearly:

"Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief. You can understand the King by these badges."

Badges are distinguishing marks. Biron now mentioned some of those distinguishing marks, which included the foolish actions of the lords:

"For you ladies' fair sakes, we lords have neglected time and have played foul play with our oaths. We have not studied as we swore we would, but instead we have fallen in love and therefore we have broken our oaths.

"Your beauty, ladies, has much deformed us, fashioning our dispositions even to the opposite end of what we intended. Out of love for you, we have done silly things although we did not want to appear silly.

"And what in us has seemed ridiculous — as love is full of unbecoming impulses, all wanton as a child, skipping and vain, superficial and meaningless, formed by the eye and therefore, like the eye, full of strange shapes, of habits and of forms, varying in subjects as the eye rolls to every varied object in its glance. We have seemed ridiculous, but we have seemed ridiculous because we acted out of love for you.

"If this foolish presence of unrestrained love that was put on by us has — in your Heavenly eyes — been unseemly to our oaths and the serious and grave part of our character, then you should realize that those Heavenly eyes, which look upon these faults of ours, tempted us to do those foolish errors.

"Therefore, ladies, since our love is yours, the errors that love makes are likewise yours. All of the errors that we have made were made out of love for you.

"Being false once allows us to forever be true to those who make us both — fair ladies, you make us both. We have broken our vows because of you and so we have been false, but we have broken our vows so that we can always be true to you ladies.

“And even that falsehood, in itself a sin, thus purifies itself and turns to grace. Breaking our vows is a sin, but it is a sin that leads to us always being true to you. The result of our breaking our vows is a virtue that purifies the sin and turns the sin to grace.”

The Princess said, “We have received your letters that are full of love, and we have received your favors, aka love tokens, which are the ambassadors of love.

“But we maidens, talking together and judging the letters and favors, thought that they were simply courtly entertainment and pleasant jests and courtesies.

“We regarded them as a pleasant way to fill up the time — like bombast and lining.”

Bombast is stuffing that fills up space in a jacket. Another meaning of “bombast” is “high-flown language.” “Lining” refers to the lining of clothing, and the lines in a letter.

The Princess continued, “But we have not thought of them as being any more serious than this, and therefore we have met your loves in what we thought was their own fashion — like a merriment and a joke.”

The ladies had not realized that the lords were seriously in love.

Dumain said, “Our letters, madam, showed much more than jest.”

Longaville said, “So did our looks.”

Rosaline replied, “We did not regard them like that. We did not think that they were serious, and so we did not treat them seriously.”

King Ferdinand said, “Now, at the last minute of the hour, grant us your loves.”

The Princess replied, “The time we have to decide is, I think, too short to make a world-without-end — a forever — bargain in.

“No, no, my lord, your grace is much perjured because you have broken your oath. You are full of grievous — yet dear — guiltiness; and therefore I say this to you:

“If for my love — and I don’t see why you should do this — you will do anything, I have something you can do for me.

“I will not trust your oath, so you need not swear to do this, but go speedily to some forlorn and austere hermitage, remote from all the pleasures of the world.

“There stay until the twelve celestial signs have brought about the annual reckoning of the passage of one year.

“If this austere unsociable life does not make you change the offer of marriage you made in the heat of your blood, and if frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin clothing do not nip the gaudy blossoms of your love, but if your love for me instead endures this trial and your love lasts, then, at the expiration of the year, come and claim me, claim my hand in marriage with you by virtue of these things you have done to deserve me.”

She held his hand and said, “And, by this virgin palm now kissing your hand, I will be your wife; and until that instant I will shut my woeful self up in a mourning house, raining the tears of lamentation in remembrance of my father’s death.

“If you are unwilling to do what I request, then let our hands part, and neither of us will be entitled to the other’s heart.”

Still holding her hand, King Ferdinand replied, “If I would be unwilling to do this, or to do more than this, in order to pamper these faculties of mine with rest, may the sudden hand of death close my eyes!

“I will go and be a hermit — my heart is in your breast.”

King Ferdinand of Navarre and the Princess of France talked quietly together.

Dumain said to Katherine, “What will you give to me, my love? What will you give to me? A wife?”

Katherine replied, “A beard, fair health, and honesty; with three-fold love I wish you all these three.”

Dumain said, “Shall I say, ‘I thank you, gentle wife’?”

“No, my lord,” Katherine said. “For a twelvemonth and a day, I’ll pay no attention to words that smooth-faced wooers say. Come to me when the King comes to my lady. Then, if I have much love, I’ll give you some.”

“I’ll serve you truly and faithfully until then,” Dumain said.

“Do not swear to do that, lest you be forsworn again,” Katherine said.

Dumain and Katherine talked quietly together.

“What says Maria?” Longaville asked.

His offer of marriage was implicit.

Maria replied, “At the twelvemonth’s end, I’ll change my black gown for a faithful lover.”

“I’ll wait with patience, but the time is long,” Longaville said.

“The time is much like you,” Maria said. “You are long in your name, and few men who are taller than you are as young as you.”

Longaville and Maria talked quietly together.

Biron said to Rosaline, “Are you deep in thought, my lady? My lady, look at me. Behold the windows of my heart, my eyes. Look at the humble wooer who awaits your answer there. Impose some service on me so that I can earn your love.”

“Often have I heard about you, my Lord Biron, before I saw you, and the world’s large tongue, which gossips freely, proclaims you to be a man replete with mocking, full of unflattering comparisons and wounding jeers, which you will execute on all people of all ranks who lie within the mercy of your wit.

“To weed this bitter wormwood from your fruitful brain, and therewithal to win me, if you please — because without the weeding of the wormwood I am not to be won — you shall this twelvemonth term from day to day visit the speechless sick and continually converse with

groaning wretches; and your task shall be, with all the fierce endeavor of your wit to make the tormented helpless people smile.”

“You want me to arouse wild laughter in the throat of death?” Biron asked. “It cannot be done; it is impossible: Mirth cannot move a soul that is in agony.”

Rosaline replied, “Why, that’s the way to choke a taunting, scoffing spirit, whose influence is begotten by that easy-going indulgence that shallow, laughing hearers give to fools.

“A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear of him who hears it, never in the tongue of him who makes it. So then, if sickly ears, deafened with the clamors of their own dire groans, will hear your idle scorns, then continue to make them, and I will have you and your fault as well, but if they will not, then throw away that mocking spirit, and I shall find you empty of that fault, and I will be joyful about your reformation.”

Rosaline had seen and heard Biron’s mocking spirit in abundance during the attempted performance of the Worthies. She had not liked what she had seen and heard.

“A twelvemonth! A year!” Biron said. “Well, befall what will befall, come what may, I’ll jest for a twelvemonth in a hospital.”

The Princess of France said to King Ferdinand, “Yes, my sweet lord, and so I take my leave.”

King Ferdinand said, “No, madam. We will accompany you on your way.”

Biron said, “Our wooing does not end like an old comic play. Jack has not Jill. These ladies’ good manners might well have made our sport a comedy. All they had to do was to marry us.”

King Ferdinand said, “Come, sir, the happy ending lacks only a twelvemonth and a day, and then it will end as it should.”

“That’s too long for a play,” Biron said.

Don Adriano de Armado walked over to the group and said to the King, “Sweet majesty, vouchsafe me —”

The Princess of France asked, “Isn’t he the man who played Hector?”

Dumain affirmed, “Yes, the worthy knight of Troy.”

Armado said to the King, “I will kiss thy royal finger, and then take my leave. I am a votary; I have vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the plow for her sweet love three years.”

“To hold the plow” means “to be a farmer.” A farmer holds the plow to guide and direct it to go where it should go.

The bawdy meaning of the phrase used the word “plow” as a noun; Armado’s “plow” was located a few inches under his bellybutton. Armado would hold his plow to guide it to where it would hit its target: Jaquenetta’s vagina.

But “hold” has a secondary meaning. It can be used in “hold back” or “withhold.” It can mean “’hold.” A proverb stated, “He who holds the plow reaps no corn.” In other words, he who does not plow reaps no crop.

The bawdy meaning of this is “He who withholds and does not use his penis reaps no infant.”

Possibly, Jaquenetta did not want to get pregnant a second time for at least three years.

Armado continued, “But, most esteemed greatness, will you hear the dialogue that the two learned men Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel have created in praise of the owl and the cuckoo? It should have followed the end of our show.”

King Ferdinand said, “Call them forth quickly; we will do so.”

Armado called, “Ho! Come here!”

Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel, Mote, Costard, and others approached and separated into two groups.

Armado said, “This side is *Hiems*, aka Winter, and this side is *Ver*, the Spring. The one is defended by the owl, the other by the cuckoo.

“*Hiems*” is Latin for “winter,” and “*ver*” is Latin for “spring.”

“*Ver*, begin.”

The people on the side representing Spring sang this song:

“*When daisies pied and violets blue*”

The daisies were “pied” — they were multi-colored.

“*And lady-smocks all silver-white*”

Lady-smocks are cuckoo-flowers.

“*And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue*

“*Do paint the meadows with delight,*

“*The cuckoo then, on every tree,*

“*Mocks married men; for thus sings he, ‘Cuckoo;*

“*‘Cuckoo, cuckoo.’ Oh, word of fear,*

“*Unpleasing to a married ear!*”

Cuckoo birds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, and so they call to mind cuckolds. “Cuckoo” is a word of fear to married men because “cuckoo” sounds like “cuckold.”

“*When shepherds pipe on oaten straws*”

The shepherds’ wind instruments are made from the straw — dried stalks — of oats.

“*And merry larks are plowmen’s clocks,*”

Larks sing in the early morning, when plowmen get up. Plowmen rise with the morning lark.

“*When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,*”

The phrase “When turtles tread” means “When turtledoves mate.” “Daws” are the birds also known as “jackdaws.”

*“And maidens bleach their summer smocks”*

The young virgins bleach their summer smocks in the sunshine as they prepare to look their best in order to get boyfriends.

*“The cuckoo then, on every tree,*

*“Mocks married men; for thus sings he, ‘Cuckoo;*

*“‘Cuckoo, cuckoo.’ Oh, word of fear,*

*“Unpleasing to a married ear!”*

Then the people on the side representing Winter sang this song:

*“When icicles hang by the wall*

*“And Dick the shepherd blows his nail”*

Dick blows on his fingernails to keep his hands warm in the winter.

*“And Tom bears logs into the hall*

*“And milk comes frozen home in pail,*

*“When blood is nipped and ways be foul,*

The ways — roads — are foul because of snow and ice.

*“Then nightly sings the staring owl, ‘Tu-whit;*

*“‘Tu-who,’ a merry note,”*

“Tu-whit; tu-who” can be understood as “to it; to woo.” “To it” can mean “go to it” or “to have sex.”

*“While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.”*

“Keel” means to “cool.” Joan would stir the pot to cool the liquid and keep it from boiling over.

*“When all aloud the wind doth blow*

*“And coughing drowns the parson’s saw”*

A “saw” is a “wise saying or platitude.” Coughing drowns out the parson’s words.

*“And birds sit brooding in the snow*

*“And Marian’s nose looks red and raw,*

*“When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,”*

The roasted crabs are crabapples that have been placed in a bowl of warmed ale or wine.

*“Then nightly sings the staring owl, ‘Tu-whit;*

*“‘Tu-who,’ a merry note,*

*“While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.”*

Armado then said, “The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.”

He meant that prose would ruin the mood created by the pleasing verse of the two songs. Mercury was the messenger of the gods, and so his words concerned serious business. Apollo was the god of music and the words of his songs were entertaining.

Armado then said to the readers of this book: “You go your way; we characters in this book will go our way. And so farewell.”

***NOTA BENE (Love’s Labor’s Lost)***

The following lines are thought to be a first draft of some lines that appear in Biron’s long speech near the end of Act 4, scene 3:

And where that you have vow’d to study, lords,  
In that each of you have forsworn his book,  
Can you still dream and pore and thereon look?  
For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,  
Have found the ground of study’s excellence  
Without the beauty of a woman’s face?  
*From women’s eyes this doctrine I derive;*  
*They are the ground, the books, the academes*  
*From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire*  
Why, universal plodding poisons up  
The nimble spirits in the arteries,  
As motion and long-during action tires  
The sinewy vigor of the traveller.  
Now, for not looking on a woman’s face,  
You have in that forsworn the use of eyes  
And study too, the causer of your vow;  
For where is any author in the world  
Teaches such beauty as a woman’s eye?  
Learning is but an adjunct to ourself  
And where we are our learning likewise is:  
Then when ourselves we see in ladies’ eyes,

Do we not likewise see our learning there?

\*\*\*

For more information about King Pepin the Short, Bellysant, and Valentine and Orson, see this book:

John Ashton, *Romances of Chivalry*. T. Fisher Unwin, 1887. 235-256.

## ***CHAPTER V: Measure for Measure***

### ***MATTHEW 7:1-5***

#### **King James Version (KJV)**

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

#### **1599 Geneva Bible (GNV)**

We may not give judgment of our neighbors.

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again.

3 And why seest thou the mote, that is in thy brother's eye, and perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how sayest thou to thy brother, Suffer me to cast out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Hypocrite, first cast out that beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

## ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

### **MALE CHARACTERS**

VINCENTIO, the Duke of Vienna.

ANGELO, Lord Deputy in the Duke's absence.

ESCALUS, an old Lord, joined with Angelo in the deputation.

CLAUDIO, a young Gentleman.

LUCIO, a Fantastic. Lucio often talks when he should keep his mouth shut.

Two other Gentlemen similar to Lucio.

VARRIUS, a Gentleman attending on the Duke.

PROVOST. The job of a Provost is to apprehend, keep in custody, and punish criminals.

THOMAS and PETER, two Friars.

A Justice.

ELBOW, a simple Constable.

FROTH, a foolish Gentleman.

POMPEY BUM, Tapster to Mistress Overdone.

ABHORSON, an Executioner.

BARNARDINE, a dissolute Prisoner.

### **FEMALE CHARACTERS**

ISABELLA, sister to Claudio.

MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo.

JULIET, beloved of Claudio.

FRANCISCA, a Nun.

MISTRESS OVERDONE, a Bawd.

### **MINOR CHARACTERS**

Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants.

### **SCENE**

Vienna.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

In a room in the Duke of Vienna's palace, Duke Vincentio and Escalus, an important advisor, were speaking. Other lords were also present.

"Escalus," Duke Vincentio said.

"My lord."

"If I were to explain to you the essential qualities of ruling, I would appear to be in love with hearing myself talk. I know that your knowledge of that subject exceeds the boundaries of all the advice that my intellectual powers can give you. No more remains but that to your competence is added power that is as ample as your worth, and then your power and your competence can work together.

"You are as well versed in the nature of our people, the established laws and customs of our city, and the conditions for administering general justice as learning and practical experience has made anyone whom we can remember."

Duke Vincentio handed Escalus a document and said, "There is our commission for you, from which we would not have you deviate."

Duke Vincentio had highly praised Escalus' knowledge of government, and yet he was not going to let Escalus be the main ruler of Vienna during his absence. For that position, he had a different man in mind.

Duke Vincentio, using the royal plural, said to one of the other lords, "Call Angelo to come here before us."

The lord exited to carry out his task.

Duke Vincentio asked Escalus, "What do you think Angelo will be like as my representative when I am gone? You need to know that we have with special soul — after careful intellectual and spiritual consideration — selected him to be the ruler of Vienna in our absence. We have lent him our terror, dressed him with our love, and given his deputation all the organs of our own power. As my deputy, he will have all my power to give capital punishment, to show mercy, and to do all the things that we do as Duke of Vienna.

"What do you think about Angelo ruling Vienna in my absence?"

"If anyone in Vienna is worthy to undertake such ample grace and honor, it is Lord Angelo," Escalus replied.

"Angelo is coming," Duke Vincentio said.

Angelo entered the room.

"I am always obedient to your grace's will," Angelo said, "and I have come to know your pleasure. What do you want me to do?"

“Angelo, there is a kind of behavior in your life that to the observer fully unfolds your history. By looking at you and by observing your actions, people know that you are a man of good character. However, your virtuous attributes do not belong to you; they are not to be indulged in and enjoyed by only an individual. Heaven does with us as we do with torches. We do not light them only for ourselves; instead, we use them to provide light for everyone around us. If our virtues and talents do not help the people around us, it is as if we do not have them. We cannot simply concentrate on perfecting ourselves and not try to help other people.

“Our spirits are not greatly moved unless they are moved by great deeds or great causes. We are given great qualities so that we can accomplish great things in the public sphere. Nature never lends to any of us the smallest unit of her excellence unless, like a thrifty goddess, she makes sure that she has the glory of a creditor — she makes sure that she receives thanks for the loan as well as interest for the loan. Anyone to whom Nature lends virtues and talents must use them rather than waste them.

“But I am addressing my speech to a person who can well perform the role that I am giving to him. Stay consistent to your principles, Angelo. In our absence you will take our place as ruler of Vienna. You will have the loan of all my power. You will decide whether to give death or mercy when you serve as judge; mortality and mercy in Vienna live in your tongue and heart. Old Escalus, although he was the first person I considered to take my place, is your second-in-command.”

Duke Vincentio handed a document to Angelo, saying, “Take your commission.”

“My good lord, let there be some more test made of my metal, before so noble and so great a figure be stamped upon it,” Angelo said, holding his commission.

He was punning on “metal” and “mettle.” He realized that he was young, and he wanted his mettle, or character, to be better tested before he exercised so much power. Also, Viennese coins were made of metal, and the picture of the Duke was stamped upon them.

“Let there be no more evasion of the duty that I am giving to you,” Duke Vincentio replied. “We have after mature and careful consideration decided to make you ruler of Vienna in our absence; therefore, accept your honors.

“We must leave Vienna so quickly and urgently that our departure must be given priority and so I leave undiscussed important matters. We shall write to you as time and our important affairs shall allow us. We will tell you how it goes with us, and we want you to keep us informed about what happens in Vienna.

“So, fare you well, Angelo and Escalus. To both of you I leave your commissions, and I hope that you perform them well.”

“Give us permission, my lord,” Angelo said, “to accompany you part of the way on your journey.”

“My haste to leave does not allow you to accompany me during even part of my journey,” Duke Vincentio said. “Nor need you, on my honor, have to worry about accompanying me. Worry instead about governing Vienna. Your freedom to act is as my own. You can enforce or qualify the laws as to your soul seems good. You can be strict or be merciful as to you seems best.

“Give me your hand.”

Duke Vincentio and Angelo shook hands.

Duke Vincentio continued, “I will leave secretly and quietly. I love the people, but I do not like to appear before them in public. That can be good public relations, but I do not relish their loud applause and vehement shouts of greeting, nor do I consider a man who enjoys such things to be of sound judgment.

“Once more, fare you well.”

“May the Heavens help you accomplish your purposes!” Angelo said.

“May the Heavens conduct you in your journey and bring you back in happiness!” Escalus said.

“I thank you. Fare you well,” Duke Vincentio said, and then he exited.

Escalus said to Angelo, “I shall desire you, sir, to give me permission to have free and frank speech with you. I need information. I need to find out the full extent of my power while Duke Vincentio is gone. I know that I have some power, but I do not know its strength and extent.”

This was wise of Escalus. To obey the rules, you need to know what the rules are. Once Escalus knew for certain the limits of his power, he could be careful not to exceed those limits.

“The same is true of me,” Angelo said. “Let us withdraw together, and both of us should soon know how much power we have.”

“I will go with your honor,” Escalus said.

They left to consult the commissions that Duke Vincentio had given to them.

— 1.2 —

On a street in Vienna, Lucio and two gentlemen talked.

Lucio said, “If the Duke of Vienna with the other Dukes does not reach an agreement with the King of Hungary, why then all the Dukes will fight the King.”

“Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary’s!” the first gentleman said.

“Amen!” the second gentleman said.

Peace is a good thing for most people, but for a soldier it can be a bad thing. No war equals no work, no work equals no pay, and no pay equals no food. Unemployed soldiers in their society were often called Hungarians because they were hungry.

Lucio said to the second gentleman, “You speak like the sanctimonious pirate who went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but he erased one commandment out of the tablet.”

“Would that commandment be ‘Thou shalt not steal’?” the second gentlemen asked.

“Yes, that is the one he erased.”

The first gentleman said, “Why, it was a commandment that commanded the captain and all the others to not follow their occupations: They went to sea to steal. There’s not a soldier of us

all who, in the prayer of thanksgiving said before a meal, relishes the petition that prays for peace.”

“I never heard of any soldier who dislikes it,” the second gentleman said.

“I believe you,” Lucio said to the second gentleman, “because I think that you have never been present when grace was said.”

“You don’t?” the second gentleman said. “I have heard a prayer said before a meal a dozen times at least.”

“The kind of grace that you heard said was in meter,” the first gentleman said. “For example: Rub-a-dub-dub; thanks for the grub. Yay, God!”

“I don’t think that you have ever heard grace in any form or in any language,” Lucio said to the second gentleman.

The first gentleman added, “Or in any religion.”

Often eager to contradict others, Lucio said to the first gentleman, “Well, why not? Grace is grace, despite all controversy; for example, you yourself are a wicked villain, despite all grace.”

Lucio had shifted the meaning of “grace” from “a prayer of thanksgiving before a meal” to “God’s mercy.”

The first gentleman said, “A pair of shears went between us.”

This image referred to scissors cutting a piece of cloth. In other words, the first gentleman was telling Lucio that they were both cut from the same cloth — both of them were wicked villains. Or, more simply, “Same to you, buddy!”

“I grant that a pair of shears went between us,” Lucio said. “I am the good velvet cloth; you are the raggedy edge of the cloth that was cut off and thrown away.”

“If you are velvet, you are good velvet,” the first gentleman said. “You are a three-piled, aka three-layered, piece of velvet, I promise you. I would rather be a piece of an English kersey cloth — a simple, ordinary Englishman — than to be piled, as you are piled, for a French velvet.”

The first gentleman was insulting Lucio. He was punning on the word “piled,” one of whose meanings in their society was to be bald. (“Pile” has as one meaning soft down, which can refer to the light fuzz on the head of a bald man.) Baldness was a side effect of the venereal disease syphilis, which was known as the French disease. A French velvet was slang for a French prostitute. In other words, the first gentleman was accusing Lucio of being infected with syphilis that he had gotten from a prostitute.

The first gentleman concluded by saying, “Do I speak feelingly now?”

By “feelingly,” the first gentleman meant “to the purpose,” but Lucio deliberately mistook it as meaning “with feeling.”

“I think that you do have feeling when you speak. I think that your mouth has the sores of venereal disease and each word you speak causes you to feel pain. I will drink to your health,

but I will never drink out of a glass that you have drunk from lest I contract the disease from which you suffer.”

“I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?” the first gentleman said. “I should not have entered a contest of insults with Lucio. He always wins.”

“You have done yourself wrong,” the second gentleman said, “whether you are infected with venereal disease or not.”

“Look, look,” Lucio said. “Madam Mitigation comes!”

He was referring to Mistress Overdone, the proprietor of a whorehouse. She mitigated, or lessened, the sexual desire of the clients who visited her whorehouse. Her name was appropriate. To “do” a woman is to have sex with her, and whores are overdone.

Lucio said, “I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to —”

“To what, I ask,” the second gentleman said.

“Guess.”

“To three thousand dolors — or dollars — a year.”

“Yes, and more,” the first gentleman said.

“A French crown more,” Lucio said.

A French crown was a coin, but it also meant a bald head — a sign of someone suffering from the French disease.

The first gentleman said, “You are always saying that I am diseased, but you are wrong. I am healthy. I am sound.”

“I disagree that you are healthy,” Lucio said. “But I agree that you are sound in the way that hollow things resound when struck. Your bones are hollow — a result of the later stages of the French disease. Impiety has made a feast of you and eaten your marrow.”

Mistress Overdone walked up to the three men.

Annoyed at being bested in insults by Lucio, the first gentleman said to her, “Which of your hips has the worst sciatica?”

Sciatica was a painful disease that was thought to be the result of the French disease.

Mistress Overdone ignored the question and said, “Well, well; there’s one over yonder arrested and being carried to prison who was worth five thousand of you all.”

“Who’s that, please?” the second gentleman asked.

“Sir, he is Claudio, Signior Claudio.”

“Claudio is going to prison? I don’t believe it,” the first gentleman said.

“You may not believe it, but it is true,” Mistress Overdone said. “I saw him arrested, I saw him carried away, and what is more, within these three days his head will be chopped off.”

“Despite all my fooling,” Lucio said, “I do not want that to happen to Claudio. Are you sure about this?”

“I am very sure about it,” Mistress Overdone said, “and the reason for Claudio to be treated like this is that he made Juliet pregnant.”

Lucio said, “Believe me, this may very well be true. Claudio promised to meet me two hours ago, and he has always been very careful to keep his promises.”

“Besides, you know, this is consistent with a conversation that we had earlier on this subject,” the second gentleman said.

“But, most of all, this agrees with Angelo’s new proclamation,” the first gentleman said.

“Let’s go and learn the truth about this,” Lucio said.

He and the two gentlemen departed.

Mistress Overdone complained to herself, “What with the war, what with the sweating cure for people infected with syphilis, what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am losing my customers.”

Pompey walked up to Mistress Overdone, who asked him, “What’s the news?”

Pompey said, “That man yonder is being carried to prison.”

Wanting to find out what Pompey knew, Mistress Overdone asked him, “Well, what has he done?”

“A woman.”

“But what’s his offence?”

“Groping for trouts in a peculiar river,” Pompey said.

“Groping for trouts” was a kind of fishing in which people felt for, aka tickled, trout in a hiding place in a river. “Peculiar” meant “private,” aka a place where no fishing was allowed. Pompey meant that the man — Claudio — had been tickling where no tickling was allowed. In other words, he had committed fornication.

“What, is there a maid with child by him?” Mistress Overdone asked.

“Maid” meant “maiden,” aka virgin, so Mistress Overdone should have asked about a former maid.

Pompey replied, “No, but there’s a woman with maid by him.”

Pompey was using language precisely. The pregnant woman’s unborn baby would be a virgin. In their society, a young male virgin was sometimes called a maid. Of course, the word “maid” also referred to female virgins.

Pompey asked, “You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?”

“What proclamation, man?”

“All whorehouses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.”

“And what shall become of the whorehouses in the city?”

“They shall stand for seed,” Pompey replied. “They would have gone down, too, but a wise burgher made an offer for them.”

Pompey enjoyed making puns. A male appendage that can stand up can be used to plant a seed in a woman’s uterus. After planting the seed, the male appendage goes down.

Burghers were middle-class men with overflowing pockets. Sometimes, burghers invested in whorehouses.

Mistress Overdone asked, “But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?”

“To the ground, Mistress,” Pompey said.

“Why, here’s a change indeed in the commonwealth!”

The commonwealth is the state of the nation, but an additional meaning is people united by a common interest. A whore and her client are united.

Mistress Overdone wondered, “What shall become of me?”

Pompey replied, “Come; don’t be afraid. Good counselors lack no clients. Although you change your place of business, you need not change your trade; I’ll be your tapster still. And by tapster, I mean your pimp; I will pimp your whores for you. Courage! There will be pity taken on you — you who have worn your eyes almost out in the service, you will have allowances made for you.”

Mistress Overdone saw the Provost, whose job is to apprehend, keep in custody, and punish criminals, coming toward them.

Alarmed, she said, “What’s going on here, Thomas Tapster? We had better leave.”

Pompey looked and said, “Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the Provost to prison. The pregnant Madam Juliet is with them.”

Not wanting to meet the Provost, Mistress Overdone and Pompey left.

Claudio, who was bound and obviously a prisoner, complained to the Provost, “Fellow, why are you showing me thus to the world? Take me to prison, where I am committed.”

The Provost said, “I am not showing you off to the world out of meanness. Lord Angelo has ordered me to do this. It is a part of your punishment.”

“Thus can the demigod Authority make us pay for our offence in full in accordance with the words of Heaven in the Bible,” Claudio said. “On whom punishment falls, it falls; on whom punishment does not fall, it does not fall. Either way, justice is triumphant.”

Claudio may have been thinking about Proverbs 21:15: “It is joy to the just to do judgment; but destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.” But Zachariah 7:9 also mentions mercy and compassion: “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother [...]”

Lucio and the two gentlemen walked over to Claudio, the Provost, and Juliet.

“How are you, Claudio!” Lucio asked. “What is the reason for these restraints? Why are you bound?”

“The reason for these restraints is too much liberty, my Lucio,” Claudio said. “Too much liberty is a surfeit, an excess. Surfeiting — eating too much — is the father of much fasting. We eat too much, and then we do not eat at all. Similarly, every immoderate use of liberty leads to restraint. Our natures pursue, like rats that gulp down ratsbane, the poison specially intended to kill them — an evil that causes them to thirst. When we drink, we die.”

Claudio was correct. Many laws of Vienna had not been enforced for a long time, and so people such as Claudio had taken advantage of that. Now Vienna was entering a time in which those laws were strictly enforced.

“If I could speak so wisely while I was under arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors so that they could have me arrested,” Lucio said, “and yet, joking aside, I would rather have the foolishness of freedom than the wisdom of imprisonment. What offence have you committed, Claudio?”

“I have committed an offense that, if I were to mention it, would cause offense again.”

“What, is it murder?” Lucio asked.

“No.”

“Lechery?”

“You can call it that,” Claudio said.

The Provost said to Lucio, “Leave us, sir!”

He then said to Claudio, “You must go now.”

Claudio said to the Provost, “Let me speak one word, good friend.”

He then said, “Lucio, a word with you.”

“A hundred, if they’ll do you any good,” Lucio said. “Is lechery such a concern? Is lechery something that officers of the law really concern themselves with?”

“In my case, they have,” Claudio said. “I had a true contract to legally marry Juliet. Because of that true contract, I got possession of Juliet’s bed. You know the lady; she is definitely my wife, except that we have not had the wedding ceremony. We put off the wedding ceremony because we were hoping to get a bigger dowry out of the coffer of her family. We thought it best to hide our love for each other until we had time to get them to approve of our love for each other. But it so happens that our most mutual entertainment in bed that we had thought to keep hidden is now written large in the belly of Juliet — that is writing that anyone can read.”

“She is with child, perhaps?” Lucio said. “She is pregnant?”

“Unhappily, she is,” Claudio said. “And the Duke has a new deputy to rule in his absence. This deputy rules harshly, perhaps because he is young and unused to rule or perhaps because he is treating the body public like a horse he is riding for the first time — to show the horse that he is its master, he digs his spurs in its side. I don’t know whether his tyranny is due to the position that he fills or it is due to his own character. Either way, he is strictly enforcing laws

that have been ignored for nineteen years. These neglected laws were like unpolished armor that was hung on the wall and never worn. But now, the new deputy is strictly enforcing these half-asleep and neglected laws. He is surely doing this to earn a reputation.”

“I am sure that you are right,” Lucio said. “The penalty for fornication is death by beheading. Your head stands so insecurely on your shoulders that a milkmaid, if she is in love, may sigh with lovesickness and blow it off. Send after Duke Vincentio and appeal to him for mercy.”

“I have tried to do that, but Duke Vincentio is nowhere to be found,” Claudio said. “Please, Lucio, do me this kind service. Today my sister is supposed to enter a cloister and become a novice. Tell her the danger that I am in. Implore her, for me, to become friends with the strict deputy. Tell her to talk to him in person and try to persuade him to be lenient toward me. I have great hope in that because in her youth she has an eager and speechless dialect, a certain body language, that moves men. Besides, she uses reason and conversation well; she is very persuasive.”

“I hope that she is,” Lucio said, “not just for you, but for other people who have done what you have done and who would be arrested and punished just like you. You should be enjoying your life. I would hate for you to lose your life because of a game of tick-tack.”

Tick-tack was a board game in which pegs were inserted into holes. The symbolism is obvious.

“I will go and see and talk to your sister,” Lucio said.

“I thank you, good friend Lucio,” Claudio said.

“I will see her within two hours.”

Claudio said to the Provost, “Come, officer, let’s leave!”

### — 1.3 —

In a room in a Viennese monastery, Duke Vincentio and Friar Thomas talked.

“No, holy father; throw away that thought. Don’t believe that the dribbling dart of love — a weakly shot arrow from Cupid — can pierce a bosom completely protected by armor,” Duke Vincentio said.

Friar Thomas had been afraid that Duke Vincentio had come to the monastery to arrange to consummate a love affair there.

Duke Vincentio continued, “Why I want you to allow me to hide myself in a friar’s habit has a purpose more grave and wrinkled and serious than the aims and ends of sexually burning youth.”

“May your grace tell me that purpose?” Friar Thomas asked.

“My holy sir, none better knows than you how I have ever loved the life withdrawn from the world. I have always lightly valued haunting social gatherings where young people show off their witless and expensive clothing.

“I have given to Lord Angelo, who is a man of strict self-discipline and firm abstinence, my absolute power and position here in Vienna; he will rule Vienna until I take over again. Lord

Angelo believes that I have travelled to Poland; that is a rumor that I have caused to be spread to the public, and that rumor is believed.

“Now, pious sir, do you want me to tell you why I have done this?”

“Gladly, my lord,” Friar Thomas said.

“In Vienna, we have strict statutes and very biting laws. These statutes and laws are the needed bits and curbs to headstrong weeds, aka people who do not contribute to society. For fourteen years we have not enforced these statutes and laws. They are like an old lion in a cave that has convinced other lions to bring food to it. These statutes and laws and the old lion no longer bite their legitimate prey.

“Now, like foolish fathers who bound together twigs of birch to make a whip, but who merely threaten their misbehaving children with it instead of actually whipping them, with the result that the misbehaving children laugh at rather than fear the whip, so our decrees might as well not exist because they are never employed. Now, liberty grabs justice by the nose, the baby beats the nanny, and good behavior is rejected in favor of bad behavior.”

“Your grace, you have always had the power to begin enforcing the laws whenever you pleased,” Friar Thomas said. “Your enforcement of the laws would be more feared than Lord Angelo’s enforcement because you are the Duke, not the Duke’s subordinate.”

“I fear that I would be too feared,” Duke Vincentio said. “It is my fault that the people ceased to fear the never-enforced laws. I gave the people the freedom to ignore the laws, and I would be tyrannous if I were to suddenly and strictly enforce the laws. When we do not enforce the laws and administer punishment for breaking them, we tacitly give our approval to the general public to break those laws.

“Therefore, indeed, my father, I have on Angelo imposed the duty of enforcing the laws. Angelo may use the authority that I have lent to him to strike to the heart of the matter and enforce the laws, all without reducing my popularity with the citizens of Vienna.

“I wish to witness what Angelo does, and to do that I need a disguise. If I am disguised as a brother of your order, I can visit both Angelo and the people of Vienna; therefore, I ask you to give me the habit of a friar and to instruct me in how I may bear myself so that I act like a friar.

“More reasons for this action I will give to you when I have more time, but I will tell you now one more reason. Lord Angelo is straitlaced and puritanical, he keeps up his guard against the doing of evil, and he scarcely confesses that his blood flows or that his appetite leans more to bread than stone. He is so puritanical that it is as if he will not admit that he has human impulses. I want to see what happens to him as a result of his having my power. Will power change him? Is Angelo really what he now seems to be?”

— 1.4 —

Isabella, Claudio’s sister, spoke to the nun Francisca in a nunnery of Saint Clare, the religious order that Isabella wished to join.

“Do you nuns have any farther privileges?” Isabella asked.

“Aren’t these privileges enough?” Francisca replied.

“Yes, they are,” Isabella said. “I don’t wish for more privileges; instead, I wish for fewer privileges. I wish that the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare, were under stricter restraints.”

Lucio called from outside the nunnery, “Hello! May peace be in this place!”

Isabella asked, “Who’s that person who is calling?”

“It is a man’s voice,” Francisca said. “Gentle Isabella, turn the key and open the door, and find out from him what he wants. You may talk to him; I may not. You are not yet a member of our religious order.

“When you have taken the vows, you must not speak with men except in the presence of the prioress. If you speak, you must not show your face. Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.”

Lucio shouted again.

Francisca said, “He calls again; please, talk to him.”

Francisca moved a short distance away.

Isabella opened the door and said, “Peace and prosperity to you! Who is it who is calling?”

Lucio entered the room and said, “Hail, virgin, if you are a virgin, as those cheek-roses of yours proclaim that you are no less! Can you help me by allowing me to see Isabella, who is a novice of this place and the fair sister of her unhappy brother Claudio?”

“Why is Claudio ‘her *unhappy* brother’?” Isabella replied. “Let me ask, and let me let you know that I am Isabella, Claudio’s sister.”

“Gentle and fair Isabella, your brother kindly greets you,” Lucio said. “To come straight to the point, he’s in prison.”

“That is bad news!” Isabella said. “Why is he in prison?”

“For something that, if I were his judge, his punishment ought to be thanks rather than something bad. He has gotten his lover pregnant.”

“Sir, don’t joke about such things,” Isabella said.

“It is true,” Lucio replied. “Although it is my familiar sin when I speak with maidens to make jokes and to act like the deceiving lapwing, a bird that deceives people and animals in order to lead them away from its nestlings, and to make my tongue say things that are not in my heart, I would not do such things to all virgins. You are a novice in a nunnery. I regard you as a virgin who is Heavenly and saintly. By renouncing the world, you have acquired a spirit that will be immortal in Heaven. Because of who you are, I must talk to you with complete sincerity, as if I were talking to a saint.”

“When you mock me by giving me good characteristics I do not deserve, you are blaspheming the truly good,” Isabella said.

“Do not believe it,” Lucio said. “You deserve the respect that I am giving to you.

“In few and truthful words, this is what has happened. Your brother and his lover have embraced. Just like those who eat grow full, just like blossoming time turns seeds in fallow ground to a bountiful harvest, even so her plenteous womb expresses your brother’s full tilling and husbandry. Your brother has planted his seed in her, and that seed is growing.”

“My brother has gotten someone pregnant? Is she my cousin Juliet?”

“Is she really your cousin?”

“Not literally,” Isabella said. “We are close friends — so close that we might as well be biologically related. We are like schoolgirls who call each other affectionate names — such things are silly but appropriate for schoolgirls.”

“She is the woman whom your brother made pregnant.”

“Then he should marry her.”

“This is the point,” Lucio said. “Duke Vincentio has very strangely gone from Vienna. He led many gentlemen, myself being one of them, to expect that there would soon be military action, but we have learned from those in the know that Duke Vincentio’s public utterances were an infinite distance away from what he really means to do.

“In his place, and with all of his power and authority, he allows Lord Angelo to govern Vienna. Lord Angelo is a man whose blood is composed only of snow-broth: melted snow. Lord Angelo is a man who never feels the wanton stings and urges of sexual desire. He reduces and blunts his natural keenness of sexual desire with two things that improve the mind: studying and fasting.

“Lord Angelo wants people to fear to use the liberty that we have had recently — liberty that has ignored the hideous law, much the way that a mouse ignores a nearby lion. To do that, he has picked out a law and decided to strictly enforce it. Your brother broke that law, the punishment for which is forfeiture of his life. Lord Angelo had your brother arrested for breaking that law, and now Lord Angelo will punish your brother; that way, your brother will serve as an example to others.

“All hope is gone, unless you have the grace by your fair appeal to soften Angelo and have him reduce the punishment. That is the essence of the errand that I have run between your brother and you.”

“Is Angelo really seeking to end my brother’s life?”

“He has already condemned your brother, and I have heard that the Provost has the order to execute your brother.”

“This is dreadful,” Isabella said. “Whatever abilities and talents I have are poor and unlikely to do my brother any good.”

“Gather together all the resources that are in you,” Lucio said.

“My resources? I doubt —”

“Our doubts are traitors, and they make us lose the good we often might win by making us afraid to make any attempt to do what good we can,” Lucio said. “Go to Lord Angelo, and let him learn that when maidens plead, men act like gods who have the power to grant them what

they want — and let him learn that when maidens also weep and kneel as they plead, men give the maidens whatever they want and exactly the way the maidens want it. Maidens can be much more persuasive than you think when it comes to men.”

“I’ll see what I can do.”

“Good, but do it quickly.”

“I will get started right away,” Isabella said. “I will stay here no longer than it takes to give the Mother Superior notice of this affair. I humbly thank you. Commend me to my brother. Early this evening, I will send him news about the outcome of my pleading.”

“Farewell,” Lucio said. “I take my leave of you.”

“Good sir, *adieu*.”

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

Angelo, Escalus, a Justice, the Provost, and some officers and attendants were meeting in a courtroom.

Angelo said, “We must not make a scarecrow of the law, setting it up to make the birds of prey afraid but letting it remain motionless so that the birds of prey grow accustomed to it and make it their perch and not their terror.”

Escalus replied, “Yes, but always let us be keen and sharp, and cut a little and prune where needed rather than let the axe fall and chop down and kill the tree. This gentleman whose life I would save — Claudio — had a most noble father!

“Your honor, whom I believe is very strict in preserving his virtue, you should realize that you yourself have sexual urges, and if the right time and right place had come along, or if the right place had come along when your sexual desire was at its height, or if you had the opportunity to act on your sexual desires and achieve the satisfaction you desired, then perhaps sometime in your life you yourself would have erred in the same way as this man whom you have sentenced to death. You yourself might have been punished in the same way by the same law.”

“It is one thing to be tempted, Escalus, and another thing to fall,” Angelo said. “I do not deny that the jury, passing sentence on the prisoner’s life, may among the sworn twelve jurors have a thief or two who are guiltier than the prisoner on trial.

“When a crime is revealed to justice, that is the crime that justice seizes. The people who are put on trial are the people who are arrested. Who knows how many thieves have served on juries that have tried other thieves?

“It is very obvious that when we see a jewel on the ground we stoop and pick it up. We do that because we see it, but we tread upon the jewel we do not see and never think about it.

“You may not extenuate Claudio’s offence because I myself have had similar sexual urges. Instead, you should tell me that if I, who have condemned Claudio, should also commit the same offense, then the judgment of death that I gave to Claudio should also be given to me with no mercy shown or extenuating circumstances being urged.

“Sir, Claudio must die.”

“Be it as your wisdom will have it,” Escalus replied.

“Where is the Provost?” Angelo asked.

“Here I am, if it pleases your honor,” the Provost replied.

“See that Claudio is executed by nine tomorrow morning. Bring to him his confessor; let him confess his sins and be prepared to die because tomorrow morning will be the end of his Earthly pilgrimage.”

The Provost departed.

Escalus thought, *May Heaven forgive Claudio — and forgive us all! Some rise because they sin, and some fall because they are virtuous. Some people walk many times on the ice of a frozen pond and crack it without falling through; other people fall through the first time they stand on ice. Similarly, some people commit many crimes without ever being caught; other people are caught the first time they commit a crime.*

Elbow, who was a Constable, and some other law officials arrived. With them were two men named Froth and Pompey, whom they had arrested. Elbow was not good with language; he committed many malapropisms in his speech.

“Come, bring them away,” Elbow said. “If these two men are good people in a commonwealth who do nothing but use their abuses — do wicked things — in common whorehouses, I know no law. Bring them away.”

“Greetings, sir!” Angelo said. “What’s your name and what’s the matter?”

“If it please your honor, I am the poor Duke’s Constable, and my name is Elbow.”

Elbow should have said that he was the Duke’s poor Constable.

Elbow added, “I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honor two notorious benefactors.”

“Benefactors?” Angelo said. “Well, what benefactors are they? Aren’t they malefactors?”

Angelo used words better than Elbow. Angelo knew the difference between a benefactor and a malefactor.

“If it pleases your honor, I don’t know well what they are, but I do know that they are puritanical villains, that I am sure of, and I am sure that they are void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have.”

Most villains are not puritanical, and most good Christians are likely to think that they prefer profession — witnessing to the world about the glory of God — to profanation. However, some villains can very well be puritanical — they are hypocritical villains.

Escalus said sarcastically, “This is well said; here is a wise officer.”

“Continue,” Angelo said. “What is the occupation or social class of these two men?”

Elbow was slow to speak.

Angelo asked, “Elbow is your name? Why don’t you speak, Elbow?”

Pompey joked, “He cannot, sir; he’s out at ‘Elbow.’”

Being out at elbow can mean wearing ragged clothing — clothing with holes in the elbows. Pompey also was joking that Elbow’s brain went out when he heard his name — Elbow was at a loss for words when he heard his name. Chances are, Elbow simply had been distracted by something and did not hear Angelo.

“Who are you, sir?” Angelo asked Pompey. “What is your occupation or social class?”

Elbow answered for Pompey, “He, sir! He is a tapster, aka bartender, sir. He is a part-time pimp. He is a man who serves a bad woman. The bad woman’s whorehouse, sir, was, as they

say, plucked down in the suburbs; and now she professes to run a hot-house, which she calls a bath-house, but I think that the hot-house is a very ill house, too.”

“Why do you think that?” Escalus asked.

“My wife, sir, whom I detest before Heaven and your honor —”

“Detest?” Escalus asked. “You detest your wife?”

Elbow should have said that he professes his wife — he declares that his wife is his wife.

“Yes, sir,” Elbow replied. “My wife is a woman whom, I thank Heaven, is an honest and faithful woman —”

“Why then do you detest her?” Escalus asked.

Escalus knew that Elbow was making malapropisms, but Escalus was not above encouraging Elbow to make a fool of himself.

“I say, sir,” Elbow replied, “I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it is not a bawd’s house, it is pity of her life because it is a wicked house.”

Elbow had stated that if the house under discussion is not a whorehouse, then it would be a pity for his wife.

“How do you know that the house is a whorehouse, Constable?” Escalus asked.

“Sir, I know it from my wife,” Elbow replied. “If my wife had been a woman cardinally given, she might have been accused of fornication, adultery, and all moral uncleanness there.”

Instead of “cardinally,” Elbow should have said, “carnally.”

Elbow was complaining that Pompey had tried to recruit Mrs. Elbow as a prostitute, or perhaps he was complaining that Froth had mistaken her for a prostitute, or both.

“This would have happened because of the woman’s agent — a pimp working for her?” Escalus asked.

“Yes, sir, by Mistress Overdone’s agent, but as my wife spit in his face, she defied him.”

Pompey said, “Sir, if it please your honor, this is not the truth.”

“Prove it before these varlets here, you honorable man,” Elbow said. “Prove it.”

Escalus said to Angelo, “Do you hear how he misuses words? He is calling us varlets, and he is calling this alleged pimp an honorable man.”

Pompey said, “Sir, his pregnant wife went into our house because she was longing, saving your honor’s reverence, for stewed prunes. Sir, we had only two stewed prunes in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish, a dish that cost some three pence. Your honors have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but they are very good dishes —”

Despite being under arrest, Pompey was having fun. He was deliberately putting much irrelevant detail into his speech, and he was parodying Elbow’s malapropisms by saying “distant time” instead of “exact time” or “at that instant.”

“Stop wasting our time,” Escalus said. “The dish does not matter, sir.”

“No, indeed, sir. It does not matter a pin. You are therein in the right, but let me get to the point,” Pompey said. “As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, pregnant with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and us having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three pence again.”

“No, indeed,” Froth replied.

“Very well,” Pompey said to Froth. “You being then, if you remember, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes —”

“Yes, so I did indeed,” Froth said.

“Why, very well,” Pompey said. “I told you then, if you remember, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you know of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you —”

Someone listening to Pompey could think that he was talking about prostitutes who suffered from venereal disease and who ate stewed prunes as a treatment for the disease. In fact, that is what he was talking about. Basically, he was babbling in the hope of confusing the judges so that they would decide not to punish him and Froth.

“All this is true,” Froth said.

Pompey said, “Why, very well, then —”

“Come, you are a tedious fool,” Escalus said. “Speak words that are to the purpose. What was done to Elbow’s wife that he has cause to complain of? Come and tell me what was done to her.”

“Sir, your honor cannot come to that yet,” Pompey said. “‘Cum’ and ‘done to her’ — get it?”

“I am using those words with different meanings from the ones you suggest,” Escalus said.

“Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honor’s leave. And, I ask you, look at Master Froth here, sir. He is a man whose income is four-score pounds a year, and his father died at Hallowmas: November 1, aka All Saints’ Day. It was at Hallowmas, wasn’t it, Master Froth?”

“No, it was on All-Hallond Eve, aka All-Hallows Eve: October 31, aka Halloween or the Eve of All-Saints’ Day.”

“Why, very well,” Pompey said. “I hope here we speak truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir; it was in the Bunch of Grapes room at the tavern, where indeed you delight to sit, don’t you?”

“I do indeed,” Froth said, “because it is a public room and good for winter because a fire is kept burning in it.”

“Why, very well, then,” Pompey said. “I hope here we speak truths.”

“This will outlast a night in Russia, when nights are longest there,” Angelo said to Escalus. “I’ll leave now, and I will leave the hearing of the case to you, hoping that it will be the case that you’ll find good reason to whip them all.”

Whipping was a common legal punishment.

“I think that I will find reason to whip both men,” Escalus said. “Good day to your lordship.”

Angelo exited.

Escalus said to Pompey, “Now, sir, come on. Tell me what was done to Elbow’s wife once more.”

“Once, sir? There was nothing done to her once.”

Elbow requested, “Please, sir, ask him what this man — Froth — did to my wife.”

“Please, your honor,” Pompey requested, “ask me.”

“Well, sir; what did this gentleman do to her?”

“Please, sir, look at this gentleman’s face,” Pompey said.

He added, “Good Master Froth, look upon his honor; it is for a good purpose.”

Pompey asked Escalus, “Does your honor see his face?”

“Yes, sir, very well.”

“Please, look at his face very carefully,” Pompey said.

“I am.”

“Does your honor see any harm in his face?”

“Why, no.”

“I’ll be supposed upon a book, his face is the worst thing about him,” Pompey said.

Pompey continued to parody Elbow’s malapropisms. The proper expression was to be deposed, aka sworn, upon a book — the Bible. If Pompey could entertain Escalus and make Escalus like him, he might be able to escape being punished.

Pompey continued, “Good, then; if his face is the worst thing about him, how could Master Froth do the Constable’s wife any harm? I would like your honor to tell me that.”

“He’s in the right,” Escalus, who was entertained by Pompey, said. “Constable, what do you say about this?”

“First, if you don’t mind,” Elbow said, “the house is a respected house; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.”

Pompey knew that Elbow meant “suspected,” not “respected,” and he decided to have fun at Elbow’s expense.

Pompey said to Escalus, “I swear by my hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.”

“Varlet, you lie,” Elbow said, rejecting the allegation that his wife was respected. “You lie, wicked varlet! The time has yet to come that my wife was ever respected by man, woman, or child.”

“Sir, she was respected by him before he married her,” Pompey said.

Anyone who did not know what the word “respected” meant could think that Pompey was accusing Elbow of the same crime that Claudio had been convicted of.

“Which is the wiser here?” Escalus asked, smiling. “Justice or Iniquity?”

He then asked Elbow, “Is this true?”

Elbow said to Pompey, “Oh, you caitiff! Oh, you varlet! Oh, you wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her!”

He said to Escalus, “If ever I was respected with my wife, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor Duke’s officer.”

He said to Pompey, “Prove this, you wicked Hannibal, or I’ll make a charge of battery against you.”

Hannibal was a Carthaginian general who brought elephants and an army across the Alps so that he could attack Rome.

Escalus, who knew the correct definitions of the words “battery” and “slander,” said, “If he hits your ear, you could make a charge of slander against him, too.”

“I thank your good worship for that suggestion,” Elbow said. “What does your worship want me to do with this wicked caitiff?”

“Truly, officer,” Escalus replied, “this man has some offences in him that you would like to discover if you could; therefore, let him continue in his courses of actions until you know what offenses he has in him.”

Elbow replied, “I thank your worship.”

He then said to Pompey, “You see, you wicked varlet, now, what’s come upon you. You are to continue now, you varlet; you are to continue.”

Escalus asked Froth, “Where were you born, friend?”

“Here in Vienna, sir.”

“And do you have an income of fourscore pounds a year?”

“Yes, if it please you, sir.”

“I see.”

Escalus then asked Pompey, who now gave straight — or mostly straight — answers because he knew that he would not be punished, “What trade do you follow, sir?”

“I am a tapster, a poor widow’s tapster.”

“What is the name of the widow you work for?”

“Mistress Overdone.”

“Has she had any more than one husband?”

“She has had nine husbands, sir,” Pompey replied. “Overdone by the last.”

“Nine!” Escalus said.

Both Pompey and Escalus smiled. “Overdone by the last” meant that she had acquired the name “Overdone” by marrying her ninth husband. However, the phrase had another meaning: Because of the nine husbands, she had been “overdone” — she was sexually exhausted.

Escalus said, “Come over here close to me, Master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters: They will draw you, Master Froth, and you will hang them.”

The tapsters really would draw Master Froth; they would draw alcoholic beverages for him, and they would draw money away from him. As for hanging, if Master Froth continued to frequent shady bars and whorehouses, a time would come when he would be cheated and he would shout at a person such as Pompey, “Go hang yourself!”

Escalus said to Froth, “Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you.”

Froth, who was happy to be let go with a warning, replied, “I thank your worship. For my own part, I never come into any room in a tap-house, but I am drawn in.”

One meaning of “drawn in” is “cheated.” When a tapster draws, aka pours, beer, quite frequently there is froth at the top. One way of cheating customers is to serve more froth than beer.

“Well, stay out of trouble, Master Froth,” Escalus replied, “Farewell.”

Froth exited.

Escalus then said to Pompey, “Come here close to me, Master Tapster. What’s your name, Master Tapster?”

“Pompey.”

“What is the rest of your name?”

“Bum, sir.”

“Indeed, your bum is the greatest thing about you; therefore, in the beastliest sense you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are a part-time pimp, Pompey, although you disguise that occupation by also being a tapster, don’t you? Come, tell me the truth; it shall go better for you.”

“Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow who has to make a living.”

“How would you make a living, Pompey? By being a pimp — a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? Is it a lawful trade?”

“It would be if the law allowed it, sir.”

“But the law will not allow it, Pompey,” Escalus said. “It will not be allowed in Vienna.”

“Does your worship mean to geld and spay all the youth of the city? Will all the youth of the city have their testicles and ovaries removed?”

“No, Pompey.”

“Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will go to it then. They will have sex,” Pompey said.

He added, “If your worship will have the police arrest all the prostitutes and all their clients, you need not fear the pimps — they will automatically be out of their jobs.”

“Some pretty serious enforcement of the laws is beginning, I can tell you. Soon there will be nothing but beheadings and hangings.”

“If you behead and hang all who offend that way — who buy or sell illicit sex — for only ten years altogether, you’ll be glad to give out a commission for the acquisition of more heads. If this law is enforced in Vienna for ten years, I’ll rent the best house in it at a ridiculously low price — the price that I would pay today for a room the size of a closet. Rent will be very cheap because of lack of tenants. If you live to see this come to pass, say that Pompey told you so.”

“Thank you, good Pompey,” Escalus replied, “and, in answer to your prophecy, listen carefully to me. I advise you to not let me find you before me again in court upon any complaint whatsoever. Certainly do not let me find you before me again in court for an offense related to the place you live in today. If I see you again in this court, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and I will prove to be a severe Caesar to you. Julius Caesar defeated Pompey the Great, who retreated to his tent, and I shall defeat you in court the way that Julius Caesar defeated Pompey the Great in battle. To speak plainly, Pompey, I shall have you whipped. Take this warning to heart, Pompey, and, for this time, Pompey, fare you well.”

“I thank your worship for your good advice,” Pompey said.

But he thought, *I shall do what flesh and fortune shall determine — they are my better advisors. Whip me? No, no; let a cartman whip his nag, or a law enforcement officer whip a whore. The valiant heart is not whipped out of his trade. I shall continue to be a part-time pimp.*

Pompey exited.

“Come over here close to me, Master Elbow,” Escalus said. “Come here, Master Constable. How long have you held the job of Constable?”

“Seven years and a half, sir.”

“I thought, by your readiness in the office, you had worked in it some time. You say, seven years altogether?”

“And a half, sir.”

“It has been a great challenge to you,” Escalus said. “They do you wrong to make you Constable so often. Aren’t there men in your ward who are competent to serve as Constable?”

“Truly, sir,” Elbow replied, “only a few have the intelligence to be Constable. Whenever they are chosen, they are glad to allow me to take the position. They give me some money, and I serve as Constable instead of them.”

“Bring the names of some six or seven men who are the most competent in your parish.”

“Should I bring the list of names to your worship’s house, sir?”

“Yes, to my house,” Escalus replied. “Fare you well.”

Elbow exited.

Escalus asked the Justice, “What time do you think it is?”

“Eleven a.m., sir.”

“Please come home and have lunch with me.”

“I humbly thank you.”

“I am grieved that Claudio must die, but there’s no remedy for it.”

“Lord Angelo is severe.”

“His severity is necessary,” Escalus said. “Mercy is not always mercy. Pardon is always the nurse of second woe. Being too lax in enforcing the law results in much lawlessness. But yet — poor Claudio! There is no remedy for it. Come, let us go, sir.”

— 2.2 —

In a room in the courthouse, the Provost asked a servant where Angelo was.

The servant replied, “He’s hearing a case; he will come here immediately after I tell him that you are here.”

“Good. Please tell him I am here.”

The servant departed to carry out his errand.

The Provost said to himself, “I will find out what Angelo wants to do; maybe he will relent and not sentence Claudio to death. Claudio has offended only as if he were in a dream! This is no true offense — and certainly not one that ought to be punished by death. All social classes and all ages have been guilty of committing this vice! Why should Claudio die because he committed it!”

Angelo entered the room and asked, “What’s the matter, Provost?”

“Is it your will that Claudio shall die tomorrow?”

“Didn’t I tell you that it is?” Angelo replied. “Haven’t you received the order for Claudio’s execution? Why are you asking me about Claudio’s execution again?”

“I am asking in case I obey the order too quickly,” the Provost said. “With your permission, let me tell you that I have seen the time when, after an execution, the judge has regretted pronouncing the death sentence.”

“Ha!” Angelo said scornfully. “Let me worry about that. Do your job, or quit. If you quit, we can easily find someone to take your place.”

“I beg your honor’s pardon,” the Provost said, adding, “What shall be done, sir, with the mourning and groaning Juliet, whom Claudio got pregnant. She is very close to her hour of giving birth.”

“Take her to some place fitter for giving birth,” Angelo said, “and do it quickly.”

The servant returned and said, "The sister of the man who is condemned to die tomorrow is here and wishes to speak to you."

"Does Claudio have a sister?" Angelo asked.

The Provost answered, "Yes, my good lord; she is a very virtuous maiden. Soon she shall join a sisterhood and be a nun, if she has not done so already."

Angelo said, "Well, bring her here."

The servant left the room.

Angelo said to the Provost, "See that the fornicatress Juliet is moved. Let her have the necessities she requires, but don't give her anything lavish. You shall receive an order authorizing you to do this."

Isabella and Lucio entered the room.

"May God save your honor!" the Provost said.

He started to leave the room, but Angelo told him, "Stay here a little while."

To Isabella he said, "You are welcome here. What do you want?"

"I am a woeful suitor to your honor," Isabella said. "Please, your honor, listen to me. I want to ask you to do something."

"Well, what is your suit to me?"

"There is a vice that I do most abhor," Isabella said. "I most desire that this vice should meet the blow of justice. I would prefer to not plead for leniency for a person who has committed this vice, but I must do so. What I prefer to do and prefer not to do are at war."

"What are you speaking about?" Angelo asked.

"I have a brother who is condemned to die," Isabella said. "I beg you, let my brother's vice be condemned, and not my brother."

The Provost thought, *Please, Heaven, give Isabella the ability to persuade Angelo to be lenient.*

"Condemn the vice and not the person who committed the vice?" Angelo replied. "Why, every vice is condemned even before it is committed. I would only be pretending to do my duty if I were to condemn the vices and record them when they are committed and yet let the person who committed the vice go free."

"Oh, the law is just but severe!" Isabella said. "I had a brother, then. I have no brother now because he is condemned to die. May Heaven keep and preserve your honor!"

Lucio whispered to Isabella, "Don't give up so easily. Plead with him some more. Beg him. Kneel down before him, and grab and hang upon his judicial robe. You are too cold; if you should need a pin, you could not with a tamer tongue ask for it. Put some emotion in your voice! Plead with him, I say!"

"Does he have to die?" Isabella asked.

“Yes, maiden,” Angelo said. “Nothing else can happen.”

“I think that something else can happen,” Isabella said. “I think that you might pardon him. If you were to pardon him, neither Heaven nor humans would grieve because of your mercy.”

“I will not pardon him.”

“Could you, if you wanted to?”

“Whatever I will not do, that I cannot do.”

“But it is possible for you to do it, and if you did it, you would do the world no wrong,” Isabella said. “Wouldn’t you pardon him if your heart were touched with the compassion for him that I feel?”

“He has been sentenced; it is too late,” Angelo replied.

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “You are too cold. You aren’t showing enough emotion.”

“Too late?” Isabella said. “Why, no, it is not too late. I, after I speak a word, may call it back again. I can change my mind.

“Believe this: No insignia that pertains to great ones — not the King’s crown, nor the sword of justice that is given to mayors and governors, nor the marshal’s truncheon, nor the judge’s robe — become them with one half as good a grace as mercy does.

“Remember this proverb: It is in their mercy that Kings come closest to gods.

“If he had been as you and you as he, you would have slipped and committed a vice like he did, but he, if he had your position, would not have been as stern and severe as you.”

“Please, leave now,” Angelo said.

“I wish to Heaven that I had your power,” Isabella said, “and that you were me. If that were so, would things be as they are now? No. I would show you what it means to be a judge and what it means to be a prisoner.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “That’s the way to do it! Go after him! Hit him hard with your words!”

“Your brother has forfeited his life because he broke the law,” Angelo said. “You are only wasting your words.”

“This is evil,” Isabella said. “Why, all the souls that have ever existed were forfeited once; Adam committed original sin and sentenced all souls to Hell. Yet God, who could have carried out that sentence, found a way to redeem souls.

“How would you be — what would happen to you when you die — if God, who is the Supreme Judge, should judge you the way that you judge other people? Oh, think about that; and mercy will then breathe within your lips — you will be like a man who has been reborn.”

“Restrain yourself, fair maiden,” Angelo said. “It is the law, not I, that condemns your brother. Were he my cousin, my brother, or my son, he would still be sentenced to death. He must die tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow!” Isabella said. “Oh, that’s sudden! That’s too quick! Spare him! Spare him! He’s not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens we kill the fowl at the right time: after it has been fattened up. Shall we serve Heaven with less respect than we minister to our gross, Earth-bound selves? Shall we send unready souls to be judged? My good, good lord, think about this. Who has died for this offence? Many have committed it.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “Good point.”

“The law has not been dead, although it has slept,” Angelo replied. “Those many would not have dared to commit that evil offence, if the first person who disobeyed the law had been punished for his deed. Now that the law is awake, it takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet, it looks into a crystal or into a mirror that shows what future evils, either already newly conceived or soon to be conceived, will be committed because the judges have been remiss in punishing the guilty. These evils that have been in the process of being hatched and born will now have no futures. Before they begin to live, they are dead. The vices are stopped before they are committed.”

“Yet show some pity,” Isabella said.

“I show pity most of all when I show justice,” Angelo replied, “because when I show justice I pity those whom I do not know, people whom an unpunished offence would afterwards gail and harm. A criminal who is not punished will commit the same crime again. I also show pity and do right to an offender who, because he is punished for committing one foul wrong, does not live to commit another foul wrong. Be satisfied and restrain yourself. Your brother dies tomorrow. Reconcile yourself to his death.”

“So you must be the first judge who gives this sentence of death, and my brother must be the first who suffers it. Oh, it is excellent to have a giant’s strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant. Great power must be wisely used.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “That’s well said.”

“If great men could thunder as Jove, the Roman King of the gods, himself does, Jove would never enjoy quiet because every pelting, paltry, insignificant petty officer would fill Jove’s Heaven with thunder — nothing but thunder! Merciful Heaven prefers to use the sharp and sulfurous thunderbolt to split the hard, gnarled oak rather than the soft myrtle, but man, proud man, who is dressed in a little and brief authority and who is most ignorant of what he’s most assured — the possession of his glassy essence, aka his soul, which mirrors God — acts like an angry ape and plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven that they make the angels weep, but if the angels had our fallible human nature, they would laugh themselves to death.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “Stay on the attack! Sic him, girl! He will relent. He’s coming round. I know it.”

The Provost thought, *Please, Heaven, let Isabella persuade Angelo not to kill Claudio!*

“We cannot regard our brother the way that we regard ourselves,” Isabella said. “The great have special privileges. Great men may joke with saints; this shows wit in great men, but if lesser men were to do the same thing, it would be regarded as foul profanation. Great men may also test saints to see if they are truly saintly, but again lesser men cannot do that.”

“You are in the right, girl,” Lucio whispered to Isabella. “Say more about that; drive the point home.”

“If a Captain swears, the Captain is regarded as simply angry,” Isabella said, “but if a soldier swears, it is regarded as outright blasphemy.”

“Well done,” Lucio whispered admiringly to Isabella. “I am surprised that you know such a truth.”

“Why are you telling me these things?” Angelo asked.

“Because people in authority, although they err like other people, always have a kind of medicine that will cover up their errors like skin that covers an abscess,” Isabella replied. “Go to your bosom and knock there, and ask your heart what it knows that is like my brother’s fault. If it confesses to a natural guiltiness such as his, then do not allow your heart to make your tongue pronounce a sentence of death upon my brother. You yourself must have felt the temptation that my brother felt.”

*Angelo thought, What Isabella says makes good sense and is true. Her ability to make good sense is actually inflaming me with sexual desire for her. Her good sense is inflaming my senses.*

He said, “Fare you well,” and turned to leave.

“My gentle lord, turn back,” Isabella requested.

Angelo said, “I will think about what you have said. Come back tomorrow.”

This was at least a short reprieve for Claudio. He would not be executed at least until after Angelo and Isabella had talked again.

“Listen to how I will bribe you,” Isabella said. “My good lord, turn back.”

This mention of a “bribe” surprised and shocked both Angelo and Lucio.

“What!” Angelo said. “Bribe me?”

“Yes, with such gifts that Heaven shall share with you.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “It is good that you are talking about Heavenly gifts. You would have ruined everything if you did not explain that.”

“I will not bribe you with foolish coins made of pure gold,” Isabella said, “or with jewels whose value rises or falls with the changes in fashion. I will bribe you with true prayers that shall go up to Heaven and enter there before sunrise. These prayers will come from preserved souls, from fasting maidens whose minds are dedicated to nothing temporal. The nuns in the religious order I will join will pray for you.”

“Well,” Angelo said. “Come to me tomorrow.”

“Good,” Lucio whispered to Isabella. “It is well. Let’s go now!”

“May Heaven keep your honor safe!” Isabella said to Angelo.

“Amen,” Angelo said, and then he thought, *I am heading toward temptation. Isabella’s prayer and my prayer are crossed; they are opposite. She prays for my honor to be preserved, but the prayer in my heart is for her honor to become compromised. I want to sleep with her.*

Isabella asked him, “At what hour tomorrow shall I come and talk to your lordship?”

“At any time before noon.”

“May God save your honor!” Isabella replied.

Isabella, Lucio, and the Provost left the room.

Angelo, now alone, said to himself, “May God save my honor from you and even from your virtue! What is this? What is happening to me? Is this her fault or mine? Who sins most: the tempter or the tempted? I can’t blame her. I can’t call her a tempter. This is my fault. I am near her the way that a piece of dead flesh is near a violet. The Sun shines on both the dead flesh and the violet. The violet is nourished, but the dead flesh rots. I do what the dead flesh does: I rot.

“Can it be true that a modest woman may more greatly sexually excite a man than a promiscuous or whorish woman? Is innocence sexually exciting? If we live in an area with a lot of wasteland, should we tear down a sanctuary so that we can build a whorehouse in its place? Plenty of prostitutes are willing to satisfy my sexual desire, so why am I sexually attracted to the chaste Isabella? Damn! Damn! Damn!

“What are you doing, Angelo? Who are you, Angelo? Do you sexually desire Isabella because of those things that make her good and make her a suitable candidate for a sisterhood of nuns?

“Oh, let her brother live! Thieves should go free despite their thefts when judges themselves steal.

“What! Do I love her? Is that why I desire to hear her speak again, and feast upon her eyes? What is it I am dreaming about? Oh, the Devil is a cunning enemy. In order to catch a saint, the Devil baits his hook with a saint! Often, the Devil uses a beautiful woman to entice a man to sin and forfeit his soul!

“The most dangerous temptation is the one that uses our goodness to entice us to sin.

“Never could the strumpet, with all of her duplicitous vigor, cosmetic art, and natural body, even once tempt me to sin, but this virtuous maid has subdued all my virtue.

“Until now, when I saw men who were foolishly infatuated with a woman, I wondered how that was possible.”

— 2.3 —

Duke Vincentio, who was now disguised as a friar, met the Provost.

“Hail to you, Provost!” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. Then, realizing that he was disguised as a friar and was not supposed to personally know the Provost, he added, “At least I think you are the Provost.”

“I am the Provost. What do you want, good friar?”

“Bound by my duty to do charity and by my blessed order, I have come to visit the afflicted spirits here in the prison. Grant me the common right of all clerics to see them and tell me the nature of their crimes, so that I may minister to them accordingly.”

“I am willing to do more than that, if more is needed,” the Provost replied.

Juliet walked over to them.

The Provost said, “Look, here comes one of the prisoners: a gentlewoman in my care, who, falling into a common fault of youth, has blistered her reputation. She is pregnant, and the young man who got her pregnant has been sentenced to death, although he is more suitable to do another such offence and father another child than to die for fathering his first child.”

“When must he die?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked.

“He is sentenced to die tomorrow,” the Provost said.

He then said to Juliet, “I have arranged a place for you to give birth. Stay here awhile, and you shall be conducted to that place.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio asked Juliet, “Do you repent, fair one, of the sin you carry?”

“I do, and I bear the shame most patiently.”

“I’ll teach you how to examine your conscience and test your penitence to see if it is sound and genuine, or merely a pretense.”

“I’ll gladly learn that,” Juliet replied.

“Do you love the man who wronged you?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked.

“Yes, as I love the woman who wronged him. I love him the way that I love myself.”

“So then it seems your most offensive act was mutually committed?”

“Yes, mutually.”

“Then your sin is of heavier kind than his.”

Juliet’s sin was literally heavier — her body grew heavier with her pregnancy. Also, she had a heavy burden to bear — she had to carry the fetus in her womb and then give birth to the child.

Some people may think that the woman is more to blame for giving birth outside marriage. Such people think that men always say “Yes,” and so it is up to the woman to say “No.” However, in their sexist society, men were thought to be more rational than women. Being more rational, men were better able to realize the consequences of their actions and men had the greater responsibility to say “No” to illicit sex.

“I do confess it, and repent it, father,” Juliet said.

“It is fitting that you do so, daughter,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “but perhaps you are repenting because you fear being punished and shamed for your sin. Perhaps you are not repenting because of your love of God. Often, we fear punishment and shame for ourselves, and we do not fear causing pain in Heavenly beings —”

Juliet replied, "I repent because what I did is an evil, and I take the shame with joy. I love the baby whom I will give birth to."

"That is as it should be," the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "Your partner, I hear, has been condemned to die, and I am going to give spiritual instruction to him. May grace go with you. *Benedicite!* May God bless you!"

The disguised Duke Vincentio departed to visit Claudio.

"Claudio must die!" Juliet said. "Love injures me. My life has been spared because I am pregnant, but while I live I will always mourn the horror of Claudio's death."

"Claudio is to be pitied," the Provost said.

— 2.4 —

In a room of his house, Angelo talked to himself.

"When I want to pray and think, I pray and think on different subjects. Heaven gets my empty words, while my imagination, which does not hear my tongue, anchors and fixates on Isabella. The word 'God' is in my mouth as if I were only mumbling His name. But in my heart is the strong and swelling evil that I have conceived in my imagination.

"The statecraft and political writings that I have studied are like a good thing that has been so often read that it has grown dry and tedious. My dignified solemnity in which — let no man hear me — I take pride I could profitably exchange for the feathered cap of a foolish and foppish courtier. The wind would blow on the feather and make it move and feed the wearer's useless vanity.

"High position and formal manners very often, together with fancy clothing and outward appearance, wrench awe from fools and even influence the wiser souls to believe in your false appearance.

"Appearance and reality need not match. I appear to be good, but what is in my heart now is not good.

"Blood, you are blood. Reality is still reality no matter what appearance suggests.

"Suppose we write the words 'good angel' on the Devil's horns. Despite what is written there, the Devil is not a good angel. My name is Angelo, but what is in my heart is not angelic."

A servant made a noise while entering the room.

Angelo, frightened because of his recognition of the sin in his heart and his thoughts about the Devil, called, "Who's there!"

The servant entered the room and said, "Isabella, a nun, wants to see you."

"Show her the way," Angelo replied.

The servant departed to bring Isabella, who was wearing the clothing of a novice in a nunnery, to Angelo.

Angelo said to himself, "Oh, Heavens! Why does my blood run to my heart, making it unable to function and also depriving all of my other parts of its life-giving functions? It is like way

too many soldiers rushing to one place, thereby crowding themselves so much that they are unable to fight and leaving other places undefended.

“Foolish throngs of people do much the same thing when someone faints. They all come to help him, and so they keep from him the air by which he should revive.

“Also similar is when the general public, subjects to a well-liked King, all stop what they are doing and crowd around him in flattering fondness, ignorant of what etiquette requires. Their uncouth love necessarily appears offensive.”

Isabella entered the room.

Angelo said, “How are you, fair maiden?”

“I have come to know what you will do about my brother,” Isabella said. “I have come to know your pleasure.”

“It would much better please me if you knew my pleasure than to demand to know from me what my pleasure is,” Angelo said, thinking of his sexual pleasure.

He added, “Your brother cannot live.”

“So be it,” Isabella said. “May Heaven keep your honor!”

“Yet your brother may live awhile longer, and, perhaps, he may live as long as you or me, but still he must die.”

All of us are mortal; we will die at some time.

“You are willing to delay implementing the sentence that requires my brother’s death?” Isabella asked.

“Yes.”

“Please tell me when his death will happen,” Isabella said. “During the reprieve from death, whether the reprieve be long or short, he can take steps to prepare for physical death so that he will not suffer spiritual death. I want his soul to be healthy when his body dies.”

“Damn these filthy vices!” Angelo said. “Murder and fornication are equally filthy. A murderer steals a man who has already been made. A fornicator, by creating a pregnancy, creates an illicit image of God, in whose image we are all created. It is as easy to take away the life of a true image of God as it is to create a life that is an illicit and counterfeit image of God. Pardoning the one type of sinner is the same as pardoning the other type of sinner. If I pardon a fornicator, I might as well pardon a murderer.”

“It is set down so in Heaven,” Isabella said, “but not on Earth. Heaven regards murder and bringing a bastard into the world as equally sins, but we humans on Earth do not.”

“Do you think so?” Angelo said. “Then I shall pose to you a question to be answered quickly. Which would you prefer: The very just law now takes your brother’s life, or, to redeem him, you give up your body to such sweet uncleanness as the woman has whom he has stained with his lust?”

“Sir, believe this, I prefer to give my body than my soul. I would rather lose my mortal body than my immortal soul.”

“I am not talking about your soul. Sins that we are compelled to commit are not truly sins. They are recorded in Heaven’s book, but we are not punished for them.”

“Do you really believe that?” Isabella asked.

“No, I will not say that I do,” Claudio replied. “I can play the Devil’s advocate in order to test the people I speak to. I can think of arguments to support both sides. I am trained in law.

“But answer this. I, who am the voice and enforcer of the recorded law, have pronounced a sentence on your brother’s life. Might there not be a charity in a sin that would save this brother’s life?”

Claudio, of course, was attempting to get Isabella to commit fornication with him in order to save her brother’s life. To persuade her, he was trying to make her think of the fornication in this particular situation as being a good deed and a charitable act rather than a sin.

“Please do such a sin,” Isabella replied. “I’ll swear on my soul that it is no sin at all, but charity.”

Isabella was misunderstanding Claudio. She thought the charitable act/sin was pardoning Claudio although he was guilty.

“If you would be willing to do this at the peril of your soul,” Claudio said, referring to Isabella committing fornication with him, “sin and charity would be equally balanced.”

Isabella again misunderstood Claudio. She thought that he was referring to her begging for her brother’s life although her brother was guilty.

Isabella replied, “I do beg for my brother’s life. If that is a sin, may Heaven let me bear it!

“I hope that you will grant my suit and pardon my brother. If pardoning my brother is sin, I’ll make it my prayer every morning to have it added to my own sins so that the punishment of that sin will not fall on you.”

“You are not understanding me,” Angelo said. “What you think I am saying is not what I am actually saying. Either you really are ignorant of what I am saying, or you are deliberately appearing to be ignorant of it, and that’s not good.”

“Let me be ignorant, and let me be in nothing good,” Isabella said. “I wish to avoid the sin of pride. I wish to have the divine grace and humility to know I am no better than ignorant and sinful.”

“Wisdom wishes to appear brightest when it criticizes itself,” Angelo said. “A beauty covered by a black mask has her beauty proclaimed ten times louder than it would be if her beauty were displayed.

“But listen to me. So that you will certainly understand me, I will speak plainly, openly, and bluntly: Your brother is to die.”

“That is true.”

“And his offence is therefore, so it appears, accountable to the law. That is why he is to die.”

“True,” Isabella said.

“Let us say that there is no other way to save his life — I am not saying that this is true, or that there exists any way to save his life, but I am postulating it for the sake of argument — except that you, his sister, finding yourself sexually desired by a person who, because of his influence with the judge or because of his own great position in society, could release your brother from the manacles of the all-binding law, and that there were no other Earthly way to save him, but that either you lay down the treasures of your body and give up your virginity to this person, or let your brother die. What would you do?”

“I would do as much for my poor brother as I would do for myself,” Isabella replied. “That is, were I sentenced to be beaten and die, the bloody marks left by keen whips I would wear as I would rubies, and I would strip myself to go to my grave as if I were preparing myself to go to my bed that I have been greatly longing for. I would give up my life before I would yield my body up to shame.”

“In that case, your brother must die.”

“And if he dies, it is the better bargain,” Isabella said. “It is better for a brother to die at once, than for a sister, by redeeming him by committing fornication, to die and be damned forever.”

“Wouldn’t you then be as cruel as the sentence of death that you have so slandered and criticized?”

“Ignominy in ransom and a free pardon without conditions are two different things. Lawful mercy such as a free pardon is not at all like foul redemption — the redemption of one person being dependent upon the sin of another person.”

“You seemed recently to consider the law a tyrant, and you seemed to argue that the sliding of your brother into sin was more a frivolous triviality than a vice,” Claudio said.

“Pardon me, my lord. It often happens that to get what we want, we do not speak what we really believe. I somewhat did excuse the thing I hate — fornication — in order to help my brother, whom I dearly love, keep his life.”

“We are all morally frail,” Angelo said.

“If we are not all morally frail, then let my brother die,” Isabella replied. “If he is not a mere accomplice among many accomplices, but instead he is the only one who owns and inherits the weakness that you have mentioned, then he should die.”

“No, women are morally frail, too,” Angelo said.

“Yes, women are as frail as the mirrors where they view themselves, mirrors that are as easily broken as they make reflections of the forms standing in front of them. Women! May Heaven help them! Men, who are created in the image of God, mar their creation and debase themselves when they take advantage of women. Call us women ten times morally frail because we are as soft as our bodies are, and we are susceptible to being seduced and giving birth to illegitimate children.”

“I think that what you said is correct,” Angelo said. “And from this testimony of your own sex — since I suppose we are made to be not so strong that we cannot be shaken by temptation — let me be bold and say that I believe your own words. Be that which you are — that is, be a woman who is capable of having children. If you are more than a woman, then you are not a woman. But if you are a woman, as your exterior clearly shows that you are, then show that you are a woman now by putting on the destined livery. Wear me and bear me.”

Angelo meant that Isabella should embrace him and bear his weight in the missionary position.

“I have no tongue — no language — but one, my gentle lord,” Isabella said. “Let me entreat you to speak the language that I speak.”

“Plainly conceive, I love you,” Angelo said. “Take off your nun’s clothing and have sex with me.”

“My brother loved Juliet, and you tell me that he shall die because he loved Juliet.”

“He shall not die, Isabella, if you give me love and have sex with me.”

“I know your virtue has a license in it,” Isabella replied. “You can pretend to be fouler than you are in order to uncover the faults of other people. You may be testing me.”

“Believe me, on my honor, when I say that my words express my purpose. I am saying exactly what I mean.”

“You have little honor although it is widely believed that you have much honor,” Isabella said. “What you want is pernicious and wicked. What is good about you is appearance, not reality. I will proclaim to everyone what you really are, Angelo. I mean it. Sign for me an immediate pardon for my brother, or with a wide-open throat I’ll shout to the world what kind of man you are.”

“Who will believe you, Isabella?” Angelo said. “My name and reputation are unsoiled, my manner of life is austere, and my position in the government is high. I will make a formal statement against you. That and these other things will outweigh your accusation against me. Your own report will choke you, and you will get a reputation for slander. I have begun to feel sexual desire, and now I give my sensuality the rein and let it gallop. Force yourself to consent to my sharp appetite. Set aside all your modesty and your too lengthy blushes; both would have me give up my desire, but both inflame my desire.

“Redeem your brother and save his life by yielding up your body to my lust, or else he must not only die, but your unkindness shall draw out his death — he will be tortured for a long time before he dies.

“Come to me later and give me what I want, or by the passion that now guides me most, I’ll prove to be a tyrant to him. As for you, say what you will, my false outweighs your true.”

Claudio departed, leaving Isabella alone.

Isabella said to herself, “To whom should I complain? If I were to tell people this, who would believe me? Some mouths are perilous; they bear in them one tongue that condemns at one time and approves at another time the same thing, forcing the law to curtsy to and obey their will. These mouths use their appetite to decide what is right and what is wrong.

“I will go to my brother. Although he has fallen under pressure from his sexual urges, yet he has in him such a mind of honor that, had he twenty heads to put down on twenty bloody blocks so that they can all be cut off, he would yield them up before he would allow his sister to stoop her body to such abhorred pollution. Therefore, Isabella, live chaste, and, brother, die. My chastity is more valuable than my brother. I’ll tell him of Angelo’s request that I commit fornication, and I will bid him prepare his mind for death and his soul’s rest.”

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

In a room of the prison, Duke Vincentio, who was still disguised as a friar, talked to Claudio.

Duke Vincentio asked, “So then you are hoping that Lord Angelo will pardon you?”

“The miserable have no other medicine than hope,” Claudio replied. “I have hope that I will live, but I am prepared to die.”

“Be absolutely sure that you will die,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Either death or life — if in fact you are pardoned — shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:

“If I lose you, life, I lose a thing that no one but fools would keep.

“Life, you are only a breath, and you are servile to all the skyey astrological influences that hourly afflict this habitation, this body, that you have.

“You, life, are death’s fool; you seek to run away from death, but always you are running toward death.

“You, life, are not noble; all the clothing and trappings of civilized existence that you have are nursed by baseness. Human life begins with a baby that dirties its diapers and is completely dependent upon other people, all food is something that was recently alive, magnificent marble architecture begins with blocks of marble cut in a quarry, and the jewels in ornaments were dug from a pit in the ground.

“You, life, are by no means valiant because you fear the soft and tender forked tongue of a poor snake — you are afraid that a venomous bite will kill you. The best of rest is sleep, and sleep is something that living people desire and yet living people are grossly afraid of death, which is no more than a sleep.

“Life, you are not yourself because you exist on many thousands of grains that issue out of dust. Dust a living person used to be, and to dust shall the living person return.

“Life, you are not happy because what you don’t have, you always strive to get, and what you do have, you forget and do not value it.

“Life, you are not constant because your mental state alters in strange ways, changing like the Moon.

“Life, if you are rich, you are poor because, like an ass whose back is bowed by heavy gold ingots, you carry your heavy riches during your journey, and your death unloads your riches.

“Life, you have no friends because your own children, who call you their sire, curse the gout, skin disease, and catarrh for not ending your life sooner.

“Life, you have neither youth nor age; instead, it is as if you dream about both while taking a nap after a large lunch. For all of your blessed youth, you are dependent like an old beggar is, and you beg for alms from your old parents who suffer shaking limbs from palsy. And when

you are old and rich, you lack the energy, passion, strength, and beauty that would make being rich pleasant.

“Can you call any of this living? More than a thousand additional deaths lie hidden in what we call life, yet we fear death, which makes us all equal.”

“I humbly thank you for your words,” Claudio said. “To sue to live, I find I seek to die, and, through seeking death, I find life. Therefore, let death come to me.”

Isabella came to the door and called, “Hello! May peace be found here, along with grace and good company!”

The Provost said, “Who’s there? Come in. Such good wishes deserve a welcome.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Claudio, “Dear sir, before long I’ll visit you again.”

“Most holy sir, I thank you.”

Isabella entered the prison cell and said to the Provost, “My business is a word or two with Claudio.”

“You are very welcome to talk to him,” the Provost said.

He added, “Look, Signior Claudio, here’s your sister.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio asked, “Provost, may I have a word with you?”

“You may have as many words with me as you please.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio whispered, “I wish to overhear their conversation. Take me to a concealed place where I can overhear them.”

Duke Vincentio was disguised as a friar, and the Provost was willing to conceal the friar — and would have been willing to conceal Duke Vincentio if he had known the friar’s true identity.

The disguised Duke Vincentio and the Provost left.

“Now, sister, what’s the comfort you bring me?” Claudio asked.

“Why, as all comforts are, it is very good, very good indeed. Lord Angelo, having business in Heaven, intends to swiftly make you his permanent ambassador in Heaven. Therefore make your best preparations speedily; tomorrow you go to Heaven.”

“Is there no remedy?”

“None, except for a remedy that, to save a head, would cut a heart in two and cause extreme anguish.”

“But is there any remedy?”

“Yes, brother, it is possible for you to live. There is a Devilish mercy in the judge, that if you’ll implore it, it will free your life, but fetter you until death.”

“Perpetual durance?”

Claudio meant life in prison, but Isabella interpreted his phrase as meaning perpetual guilt.

“Yes, just exactly that: perpetual durance, a restraint. Even if you were free to travel throughout the world, you would still be restrained.”

Isabella meant that Claudio would not be able to escape from his guilt no matter where he traveled.

“What kind of restraint?” Claudio asked.

“Such a one as, if you consented to it, would tear your honor away from you just like bark being stripped from a tree. You would be left naked, without honor.”

“Let me know the point. Speak clearly.”

“I am afraid of what you may decide, Claudio; and I quake in fear that you would value a feverous life and more greatly respect six or seven additional winters than an everlasting honor. Do you dare to die?”

“The feeling we have in death is mostly fearful anticipation rather than pain. The poor beetle, which we tread upon, in bodily suffering endures a pang of pain as great as when a giant dies.”

Isabella meant that the suffering during death of a giant was no worse than the suffering of a beetle that is stepped on; however, her words could be interpreted as saying that the suffering during death of a beetle was as great as the suffering of a dying giant. Her words could also be interpreted as saying that all creatures, great and small, fear death, suffer during death, and want to keep on living.

“Why are you trying to make me feel shame?” Claudio asked. “Do you think that your flowery words of tenderness can make me resolve to die? Do I need your flowery words to reconcile myself to death? If I must die, I will encounter darkness as I would a bride, and hug it in my arms.”

“There spoke my brother; when you said those words a voice metaphorically came out of my father’s grave,” Isabella said. “Yes, you must die: You are too noble to save your life with dishonorable expedients.

“Angelo is a deputy who outwardly appears to be a saint. His grave visage is immovable and his deliberate words nip youth in the head the way that a falcon bites its prey to kill it. He also drives follies into hiding the way that a falcon does a fowl. Nevertheless, Angelo is a Devil. If his sin were to be vomited out of him the way that mud and silt are removed from a pond, his sin would appear to fill a pond as deep as hell.”

“The gilted Angelo!” Claudio cried.

“Oh, hypocrisy is the cunning uniform of Hell, which invests and covers the damnedest body in gilted trimmings! Hell can give a damned soul the appearance of a Puritan!

“Claudio, what do you think about this? If I were to give Angelo my virginity, he would set you free.”

“Oh, Heavens! That cannot be true,” Claudio said.

“Yes, it is true,” Isabella replied. “He would give to you — in return for this rank offence, this sexual harassment and intended rape of me — the freedom to continue to offend him. He would allow you to continue to sin with Juliet.

“This night is the time when I should do what I abhor to name, or else you die.”

“Don’t do it,” Claudio said.

“If he wanted my life, I would throw it down for your deliverance from death as readily as I would throw away a pin.”

“Thanks, dear Isabella.”

“Be ready, Claudio, for your death tomorrow. Be prepared to die.”

“Yes,” Claudio said.

He immediately began to have second thoughts.

He asked, “Has Angelo sexual desires in him that thus can make him bite the law on the nose and treat it with contempt, when he should instead enforce the law? Surely, it is no sin, or of the seven deadly sins, it is the least sinful sin.”

“Which is the least?”

“If lechery were damnable, and with Angelo being so wise, why would he for a short bout of sex and folly be everlastingly punished in Hell? Oh, Isabella!”

“What are you saying!”

“Death is a thing to be feared.”

“And a shamed life is to be hated.”

“Yes, but to die, and go we know not where; to lie trapped in a cold corpse and to rot; to have this alert and warm body become a clod of clay, to have this spirit, which is capable of feeling delight, bathe in fiery floods or reside in a piercingly cold region of thickly layered ice; to be imprisoned in the invisible winds and blown with restless violence round about a world that is suspended in space; or to be worse than the worst of those souls whom unrestrained and uncertain thought imagine to be howling in Hell: It is too horrible!

“The weariest and most loathed worldly life that age, aches and pains of every bodily kind, penury, and imprisonment can lay on us in the Land of the Living is a paradise to what we fear we will endure when we are dead.”

“I can’t believe what I am hearing!”

“Sweet sister, let me live,” Claudio pleaded. “What sin you do to save a brother’s life, our sibling love for each other will make so much allowance for the deed that it will become a virtue.”

“Oh, you beast without a moral sense! Oh, you faithless coward! Oh, you dishonest wretch! Will you be made a man out of — be given life because of — my vice?

“Isn’t it a kind of incest, to take life from your own sister’s shame? From my illicit sex you would be ‘reborn and come to life’ again! What should I think about you?

“Heaven forbid my mother played my father fair and was faithful to him! My father never fathered such a warped and wild weed as you! You must be a bastard! I defy you! You are no

brother of mine! Die! Perish! If I could stop your death simply by bending down, I would not! I would let you die! I'll pray a thousand prayers that you die; I will not pray a single word to save you."

"Please, listen to me, Isabella."

"Your sin is not a one-time occurrence; it is your career, your habitual way of life. Showing mercy to you would simply allow you to commit more fornication. It is best that you die quickly."

"Please, listen to me, Isabella."

Duke Vincentio, still disguised as a friar, had heard every word. Now he came out of hiding and said to Isabella, "Allow me to say a word, young sister — only one word."

"What do you want?"

"If you will give me some of your leisure time, I want to speak with you soon. What I would ask from you is something that will benefit you."

"I have no superfluous leisure time," Isabella replied. "The time that I spend with you is time that must be stolen from the other things that I need to do, but I will talk to you for a while."

She walked a short distance away, and so she was unable to hear Duke Vincentio talk to Claudio, her brother.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, "Son, I have overheard the conversation that has passed between you and your sister. Angelo never intended to corrupt her; he only made a test of her virtue to see if his judgment of people's characters was correct. She, having the integrity of honor in her, made him that virtuous denial that he was very glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore, prepare to die. Do not comfort yourself with false hopes. Tomorrow you must die; get on your knees, pray, and get ready to die."

"Let me ask my sister to pardon me," Claudio said. "I am so out of love with life that I would beg to be rid of it."

"Keep that thought. Farewell."

Claudio went to his sister, talked briefly with her, and left the room.

As Claudio and Isabella were talking, the disguised Duke Vincentio said, "Provost, may I have a word with you?"

The Provost came forward and asked, "What do you want, father?"

"That now you have come here, you will leave. Leave me alone for a while with the maiden Isabella. My mind and my friar's robe both proclaim that I intend no harm to her. She shall not be harmed while she is alone with me."

"Very well," the Provost said, and then he left the room.

Isabella came over to the disguised Duke Vincentio, who said to her, "The hand that has made you beautiful has made you good. Beauty often discards goodness — beauty and chastity

seldom meet. But because grace is the soul of your character, you will always be beautiful and virtuous.

“Fortune and luck have made known to me the assault on your virtue that Angelo has made; and, except that I know of other examples of Angelo’s sinfulness, I should wonder at Angelo. What will you do to content this deputy for Duke Vincentio — Angelo — and to save your brother?”

“I am going to Angelo now to tell him what I have decided,” Isabella replied. “I prefer that my brother die by the law than that my son should be a bastard — unlawfully born. But how greatly is good Duke Vincentio deceived in Angelo! If ever he returns and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or I will reveal Angelo’s sinful conduct.”

“That should be a good thing to do,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation; he will say that he was only making trial of you and testing your virtue. Therefore listen to what I advise. I want to help, and I have an idea that can make all things right.

“I believe that you may very righteously do a poor wronged lady a benefit that she deserves, redeem your brother from the angry law and prevent his death, do no stain of sin to your own gracious person, and much please the absent Duke Vincentio if he ever returns and hears about this business.”

“Let me hear you speak more about your plan,” Isabella said. “I have the courage to do anything that appears to be not foul and sinful to me.”

“Virtue is bold, and goodness is never fearful,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Have you heard of Mariana, the sister of Frederick, the great soldier who drowned at sea?”

“I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name. She has a good reputation.”

“Angelo should have married her; he was engaged by oath to marry her. With such an oath, many couples have sex. When sex occurs, a wedding is mandatory. If sex does not occur, then in some situations, such as the unfaithfulness of one partner, the engagement can be lawfully and ethically broken. The wedding day of Angelo and Mariana was set, but between the time of the engagement and the wedding Frederick, Mariana’s brother, was wrecked at sea. The ship was carrying Mariana’s dowry.

“Listen to the bad things that befell the poor gentlewoman. She lost a noble and renowned brother, who in his love toward her was always most kind and brotherly. Along with him, she lost the greatest part of her fortune: her marriage-dowry. She also lost her husband-to-be: this Angelo who has the reputation of being so virtuous.”

“Can this be true?” Isabella asked. “Did Angelo leave her?”

“He left her in her tears, and he did not dry one of them with his comfort. He swallowed his vows to her whole and did not keep them; instead, he pretended that she had been unfaithful to him.

“In short, Angelo bestowed on her what was already hers: her own lamentation. Even now, she weeps for him, and her tears affect him the way they would marble — not at all.”

“Death would deserve much praise if it were to take this poor virgin Mariana from the world! What corruption is in this life, that it will let this man Angelo continue to live! But how can she receive any benefit from this situation?”

“You may easily heal the rupture between Angelo and Mariana. By doing so, you will save your brother, and you will do so without losing any honor.”

“Tell me how I can do this, good father.”

“The virgin Mariana still loves Angelo; his unjust unkindness that in all reason should have quenched her love for him has, like an obstacle or impediment in a current of water, made it more violent and unruly.

“Go to Angelo; answer his sexual harassment of you with a plausible obedience,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Agree with his demands and say that you will sleep with him, but with conditions. First, your stay with him must not be long. Second, the time must be dark and silent, with no one bustling about. Third, the place must be convenient for you.

“This being granted — now comes the most important part — we shall advise this wronged maiden to go to the appointment instead of you. She will go in your place; if the sexual encounter becomes public afterward, it may compel Angelo to marry her. If this plan works, your brother will be saved, your honor remain untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged by being married, and the corrupt deputy weighed in the scales of justice.

“I will go to the maiden Mariana and inform her of our plan and prepare her for the sexual encounter with Angelo.

“If you agree to participate in carrying out his plan, the benefits will justify the deceit. The benefits will be a shield against reproach.

“What do you think?”

Isabella replied, “The plan itself makes me happy, and I trust the plan will result in a very prosperous and perfect outcome.”

“It depends very much on your being able to do your part of the plan,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Go speedily to Angelo. If he wants you to go to his bed tonight, say that you agree. I will go immediately to Saint Luke’s. There, at a farmhouse surrounded by a ditch resides this dejected Mariana. At that place come and see me and tell me what happened when you met with Angelo. Meet with Angelo quickly, so that you can visit me soon.”

“I thank you for this comfort,” Isabella said. “Fare you well, good father.”

She departed.

### — 3.2 —

Several people entered the room in which the disguised Duke Vincentio was standing: Elbow the Constable, Pompey the part-time pimp, and some law-enforcement officers.

Elbow said to Pompey, “Unless we can stop you pimps from buying and selling men and women like beasts, we shall see female bellies all over the world filled with brown and white bastard — and I don’t mean just the wine we call ‘bastard.’”

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *Heavens! What is going on here?*

Pompey replied, “The world has two usuries: prostitution and usury. Prostitution creates bastards; usury creates interest. It has not been a merry world since the practitioners of the merrier usury — prostitution — were outlawed and prosecuted, and practitioners of the worse usury — lending money at high interest — were encouraged by order of law to grow rich and wear expensive clothing such as a furred gown to keep each usurer warm. The furs were fox on top of lamb, to signify craftiness overcoming innocence, and to signify that craft, being richer than innocence, is more important and highly regarded in this world.”

“Come this way, sir,” Elbow said to Pompey.

Then he said to Duke Vincentio, who was still disguised as a friar, “Bless you, good father friar.”

“And bless you, good brother father.”

“Father” was a term used in their society to refer to an older man as well as to a priest; Elbow was an older man.

The disguised Duke Vincentio continued: “What offence has this man committed, sir? What has he done to offend you?”

“Sir, he has offended the law,” Elbow replied, “and, sir, we think that he is a thief, too, sir, because we have found upon him, sir, a strange picklock, which we have sent to the deputy.”

The picklock was a skeleton key that was used to unlock many doors.

Hearing this, the disguised Duke Vincentio was able to guess Pompey’s occupation.

“Heavens!” he said to Pompey. “You are a bawd, a wicked bawd! You are a pimp! The evil that you have caused to be done, that is the means by which you live. Do you ever think what it means to cram your mouth with food or clothe your back from such a filthy vice? Do you ever say to yourself, ‘From their abominable and beastly sexual touches I drink, I eat, I clothe myself, and I live?’ Can you believe that you are living a good life when its maintenance depends on such a stinking business? Mend your life! Sin no more!”

Pompey replied, “Indeed, it does stink in some ways, sir, but yet, sir, I would argue —”

“No, if the Devil has given you arguments in favor of sin, you will show that you are the Devil’s property,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

He then said to Elbow, “Take him to prison, officer: Punishment and instruction must both do their work before this rude beast will learn to mend his ways.”

“He must appear before Angelo, the Duke’s deputy, sir,” Elbow replied. “Angelo has given Pompey warning: The deputy cannot abide a whoremaster. If anyone is a whoremonger and appears before Angelo, it would be better if he were to do anything else but appear before Angelo.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio was able to recognize that Pompey had at least one good characteristic: He was not a hypocrite.

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *I wish that we were all as free from sin as Angelo falsely seems to be, and as free from hypocrisy as Pompey actually is.*

Elbow said about Pompey, “His neck will come to your waist — a cord, sir.”

Elbow was referring to the cord, aka rope, that Duke Vincentio wore around his waist because he was disguised as a friar. Pompey’s neck would be in a noose if he were punished for his crime by being hung.

Seeing Lucio coming toward them, Pompey said, “I spy comfort; I see money for my bail. Here’s a gentleman and a friend of mine.”

Lucio said, “How are you, noble Pompey! What, at the wheels of Caesar? Are you being led in triumph?”

In Roman triumphs, defeated enemies would walk behind the vehicle that carried their conqueror. In history, Pompey was never led in triumph. However, his sons were led in triumph after Julius Caesar defeated them in 45 B.C.E. in the Battle of Munda.

Lucio continued: “What, is there none of Pygmalion’s images, a newly made woman, to be had now by putting one’s hand in one’s pocket and extracting it clutched?”

Pygmalion was an ancient sculptor who fell in love with one of his statues: that of a lovely young woman. He prayed to Aphrodite, goddess of sexual desire, who brought the statue to life. Pygmalion married the newly created woman and together they had a son.

In their society, statues were often painted, and prostitutes in his society used paint — makeup; therefore, when Lucio referred to Pygmalion’s images, he was referring to prostitutes. Men would reach into their pockets, clutch money, and pull the money out in order to pay for the prostitute.

Lucio asked Pompey, “Do you have anything to say in reply? Huh? What do you have to say to this tune, matter, and method? Has a flood washed away sin? What do you have to say, mate? How do you like Angelo’s reforms? Is your way of life completely destroyed? Are you unhappy? Are you unable to speak? How is it going for you?”

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *He babbles and babbles, and then he babbles worse than before!*

“How is my dear morsel, your mistress? Does Mistress Overdone still work as a procurer?”

“Indeed, sir,” Pompey said, “she has eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.”

Beef was slang for flesh-food that had been prepared for consumption — or, more simply, prostitutes. A treatment for venereal disease was to sweat in a tub. Tubs were also used to salt, aka powder, beef.

“Why, this is good,” Lucio replied. “This is the right of it; it must be so. A fresh whore must become a powdered bawd — it is inevitable. Are you going to prison, Pompey?”

“Yes, indeed, sir.”

“Why, it is not amiss, Pompey,” Lucio said. “It is hardly a surprise. Farewell. Go, and say that I sent you there. Are you going to prison for debt, Pompey? Or for what reason?”

Lucio had a cruel streak in him. He knew why Pompey was going to prison. In fact, he may have informed on Pompey and on Mistress Overdone.

“I am going to prison for being a bawd,” Pompey replied.

Lucio said to Elbow, “Well, then, imprison him. If imprisonment is the due of a bawd, why, it is his right to be in prison. He is without doubt a bawd, and from antiquity, too. He was bawd-born — given birth by a bawd, and born to be a bawd.”

Lucio added, “Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey. You will act like a good husband now, Pompey; you will stay at home in your house.”

“I hope, sir, your good worship will pay my bail,” Pompey said.

“No, indeed, I will not pay your bail, Pompey; it is not the fashion these days to pay the bail of bawds. Instead, I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage, your time in prison. That is the fashion nowadays. If you do not take your time patiently, why, your mettle, aka spirit, is all the more — as will be the metal of your fetters. *Adieu*, trusty Pompey.”

Lucio then said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “Bless you, friar.”

“And you,” the disguised Duke Vincentio replied.

“Does Bridget still paint, Pompey? Does she still wear makeup?” Lucio asked.

Elbow said to Pompey, “Come this way, sir.”

“You will not pay my bail, then, sir?” Pompey asked Lucio.

“No, Pompey, not then and not now,” Lucio replied.

He then asked, “What is the news, friar? What is the news?”

Elbow repeated, “Come this way, sir. Come.”

“Go to your kennel, Pompey,” Lucio said. “Go.”

Elbow, Pompey, and the officers departed, leaving Lucio and the disguised Duke Vincentio alone.

“What news, friar, have you heard about the Duke?”

“I have heard none. Can you tell me of any?”

“Some say that he is with the Emperor of Russia; others say that he is in Rome. But where do you think he is?”

“I don’t know where he is, but wherever he is, I wish him well.”

“It was a mad and eccentric trick of him to steal secretly away from Vienna and usurp the beggary he was never born to. He left his high position here, and wherever he is, he has a lower position than ruler. Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence; he severely punishes criminals.”

“He does well when it comes to punishment.”

“A little more leniency when it comes to lechery would do no harm in him; he is somewhat too crabbed that way, friar.”

“It is too prevalent a vice, and severity must cure it.”

“Yes, truly the vice is prevalent. It has many partakers and many friends, and it is impossible to stop until eating and drinking have been stopped. When there are no more people, there will be no more lechery.

“They say that this Angelo was not made by man and woman in the usual way of producing children. Is it true, do you think?” Lucio asked.

“How else could he have been made, then?”

“Some say that a sea-maid, aka mermaid, spawned him; some say that he was begotten by two dried codfishes. But it is certain that when he makes water, aka pees, his urine is hard pellets of ice — that I know to be true. He also has the reproductive capacity of a puppet — there can be no doubt about that.”

“You are full of jokes, sir, and speak rapidly,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, and then he thought, *You speak so rapidly that you speak without thinking.*

“Why, Angelo is ruthless — he is willing to take away the life of a man because of the criminal rebellion of what the man has in between his legs! Would the Duke who is absent have done this? Before he would have hanged a man for begetting a hundred bastards, the Duke would have paid for the nursing of a thousand bastards. The Duke had some feeling for the act of sex: He knew the service and utility of it, and that taught him to be merciful.”

“I never heard that the absent Duke had much of a reputation for sleeping with women; he was not inclined to engage in unethical sex.”

“Oh, sir, you are deceived,” Lucio said. “You are wrong.”

“It is not possible.”

“You don’t believe that the Duke was inclined to engage in unethical sex? Yes, he was. When he saw a beggar who was fifty years old, he used to put a ducat in her dish, if you know what I mean and I think you do. The Duke had strange fancies in him. He used to be drunk, too — I can tell you that.”

“You do him wrong, surely,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

“Sir, I was an intimate friend of his. A sly fellow was the Duke, and I believe I know the cause of his leaving Vienna.”

“What, I ask, might be the cause?”

“No, you must pardon me for not telling you,” Lucio said. “It is a secret that must be locked within my teeth and lips, but I can tell you this: The majority of his subjects believe that the Duke is wise.”

“Wise! Why, there is no question but that the Duke is in fact wise!”

“He is a very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow,” Lucio said.

“Either this is envy in you, or folly, or a mistake,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “The very stream of his life and his management of Vienna must — if a reference were needed — give him a better proclamation. His biography and the record of his rule in Vienna show him to be much better than what you have said about him. Let his achievements testify for him, and he shall appear even to the envious to be a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier. Therefore you speak ignorantly and without knowledge, or if you have some knowledge of the Duke, you have much darkened your evaluation of the Duke because of malice toward him.”

“Sir, I know him, and I love him,” Lucio said, falsely. He did not know Duke Vincentio.

“Love talks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love. Someone who loved the Duke would know him better than you do, and someone who knew the Duke would love him more than you do.”

“Come, sir, I know what I know.”

“I can hardly believe that, since you don’t know what you are saying. But, if the Duke ever did return, as our prayers are that he will, let me desire you to make your charges in his presence. If you have spoken the truth, you will have the courage to maintain that it is the truth. I am bound by duty to summon you to testify before the Duke that what you have said about him is true, and so I ask you for your name.”

“Sir, my name is Lucio; my name is well known to the Duke.”

“He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report to him what you have said about him.”

“I am not afraid of you.”

“Oh, you hope that the Duke will not return to Vienna, or you imagine that I am someone who cannot hurt you. But indeed I can do you little harm: You will swear before the Duke that you did not say these things.”

“I’ll be hanged first,” Lucio said. “You are deceived about me, friar. But no more about this. Can you tell me whether Claudio is to die or not?”

“Why should Claudio die, sir?”

“Why? For filling a bottle with a funnel, if you know what I mean and I think you do. I wish that the Duke we have been talking about would return to Vienna again. This deputy without genitals will depopulate the province with continence and abstinence from sex. He will not allow sparrows to build nests in his house eaves because sparrows are lecherous. The Duke always would have dark deeds darkly answered; he would never bring them to light. Since no one was ever charged with crimes of lechery, the crimes were never punished. I wish that the Duke would return! This Claudio is condemned to death because he took off his pants. Farewell, good friar. Please, pray for me. The Duke, I say to you again, would eat mutton on Fridays.”

Fridays were days of abstinence from meat for Catholics, and Lucio was saying that Duke Vincentio would eat meat on days of abstinence. And since “mutton” was a slang word for prostitutes, Lucio was saying that Duke Vincentio would engage in illicit sex.

Lucio added, “He’s now past fornication because of old age, yet even now I say to you that he would kiss a beggar even if she smelt of brown bread and garlic. Say that I said so. Farewell.”

Lucio exited, and the disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “No powerful or great people can escape censure; back-biting calumny will strike at the whitest virtue. What King is so strong that he can tie up the gall in a slanderous tongue? But who is coming here?”

Escalus, the Provost, and some law-enforcement officers entered the room. With them was Mistress Overdone, who had been arrested.

Escalus said, “Go and take her away to her prison cell!”

“My good lord, be good to me,” Mistress Overdone pleaded. “Your honor has the reputation of being a merciful man, my good lord.”

“You have been warned two and three times, and yet you are again guilty of the same crime!” Escalus said. “This would make even the embodiment of Mercy swear and play the tyrant by giving you a harsh sentence.”

The Provost said, “She has been a bawd for eleven years’ continuance, may it please your honor.”

Of course, such information would not please Escalus, but “may it please your honor” was an idiom meaning “if your honor doesn’t mind my telling you.”

Mistress Overdone said, “My lord, this information against me comes from Lucio. He made Mistress Kate Keepdown pregnant when the Duke was still in Vienna. Lucio promised to marry her. His child is a year and a quarter old, come the feast day of Saint Philip and Saint Jacob: May 1. I myself have taken care of his child, and see how he goes around and abuses me!”

“Lucio is a fellow who frequently disregards the law,” Escalus said. “Let him be brought before us. Take her to her prison cell!”

Mistress Overdone wanted to plead with Escalus, but he told her, “Don’t. No more words.”

The law-enforcement officers took Mistress Overdone away.

Escalus said, “Provost, my colleague Angelo will not change his mind: Claudio must die. Let him be provided with religious advisors and all charitable preparation that Christians can provide. If Angelo administered justice with the amount of pity that I feel for Claudio, Claudio would not be going to die.”

“If you don’t mind my saying so,” the Provost said, “this friar has been with Claudio, and he has given him spiritual counsel to help him accept his death.”

“Good day, good father,” Escalus said.

“May blessings and goodness fall upon you!” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

“Where are you from?”

“I am not from this country, although now I am able to reside here for a while. I am a brother of a gracious order, recently come from the Holy See on special business from his holiness.”

“What news is abroad in the world?” Escalus asked.

The answer given by the disguised Duke Vincentio was bitter and cynical: “None, except that so great a fever is afflicting goodness that only the death of goodness can cure the fever.

“The only things in demand in the modern world are the newest things — newness for its own sake. Obviously, we should make use of the old things that work, and we should replace them with new things only when the new things work better.

“To be aged in any undertaking is considered to be as dangerous as it is considered virtuous to be faithful in any undertaking. Obviously, it ought to be considered a virtue to be faithful only to *good* undertakings. Obviously, one should become aged only as a result of working on *good* undertakings. These days, to be virtuous is to be in danger.

“Scarcely enough trustworthiness is in existence to make societies secure and make it safe to associate with other people, but there is foolish optimism enough to make many ‘friendships’ cursed because pretend friends will take advantage of the foolish optimists. Obviously, things work out best if everyone is true to their word and no one takes advantage of another person.

“The wisdom of the world considers and thinks about these riddling problems.

“This news is old enough, we have heard it before, and yet it is news that we hear again every day.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio hesitated and then asked, “Please, sir, tell me what kind of disposition did the absent Duke have?”

Escalus replied, “He was one who, above all other battles, fought especially to know himself. He did his best to follow this ancient piece of wisdom: Know thyself.”

“What kind of pleasure did he enjoy?”

“He preferred to rejoice at seeing another person being merry rather than himself be merry; he was a gentleman of all temperance,” Escalus said. “But let’s not talk about him, but simply pray that his business may prove to be prosperous; instead, tell me about Claudio. Is he prepared to die? I understand that you have visited him.”

“Claudio does not believe that he has received an unjust sentence from his judge. He most willingly humbles himself and accepts his sentence; however, his human weakness had led him to imagine possible scenarios in which he would not lose his life. I have spent time with him and let him know that none of these futile hopes has any basis in reality, and now he knows that he will die.”

“You have done your duty to Heaven and to the prisoner,” Escalus said. “I have labored to get a lesser sentence for the poor gentleman to the furthest limit of my humble ability, but Angelo is so severe in giving sentences that he has forced me to tell him that he is indeed acting like the embodiment of Justice. By that, I mean he is the embodiment of Justice without Mercy.”

“If his own life is as virtuous as he wants and expects other people to be, it is well for him, but if he fails to live up to the standards that he imposes on other people, he has sentenced himself — he shall receive the same punishment that he gives to other people,” Duke Vincentio, still disguised as a friar, said. “So it is written in Matthew 7:2: ‘For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.’”

“I am going to visit the prisoner,” Escalus said. “Fare you well.”

“May peace be with you!”

Alone, the disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “He who the sword of Heaven — judicial power — will bear should be as holy as severe; he must be holy if he gives severe sentences. He must know that he is to set a good example for others to follow. He must have the grace to stand firmly on his principles, and he must have the strength to act upon them. He must not judge other people more harshly or less harshly than he judges himself. May the judge be shamed who gives the death sentence to people who commit crimes and sins that the judge himself commits and enjoys! May Angelo be twice treble shamed because he weeds my vice — which was to allow for a long time some sexual crimes to go unpunished — and lets his own vices grow!

“Oh, what vices may a man hide within him although he appears to be an angel on the outward side! The man has committed the same crimes as other people but deceived everyone by hiding his crimes. He uses worthless spiders’ strings to drag the most ponderous and substantial things to a place of shame! His hypocrisy shames his supposed virtue.

“I must apply craft against vice. With Angelo tonight shall sleep Mariana, whom he once betrothed but now despises, and so the disguised Mariana will pay Angelo what he demands from Isabella. She will pay him with falsehood — the illusion that she is Isabella. By so paying him, Mariana will fulfill the old pre-marriage contract that she and Angelo had made — with the result that Angelo *must* marry her.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Mariana and a boy were outside the farmhouse at St. Luke's. She listened as the boy sang this song:

*"Take, oh, take those lips away,*

*"That so sweetly were forsworn;*

*"And those eyes, the break of day,*

*"Lights that do mislead the morn —*

*"They are eyes so bright that the morning mistakes them for the rising Sun.*

*"But my kisses bring again, bring again,*

*"Seals of love — kisses — but sealed in vain, sealed in vain."*

The theme of the song was a false vow of love.

"Stop singing," Mariana, who saw the disguised Duke Vincentio coming toward them, said to the boy. "Quickly go away. I see coming here a man of comfort, whose advice has often quieted my troublesome discontent."

The boy departed.

Mariana said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, "Please pardon me, sir. I well wish that you had not found me here listening to music. Let me excuse myself. Please believe me when I say that the music did not amuse me with unseemly merriment but it did soothe my sorrow."

"That is good," the disguised Duke Vincentio said, "although music often has such a charm that it can make sin seem to be good, and lead good to what can harm it.

"Please, tell me whether anybody has inquired for me here today. I have promised to meet someone here just about this time."

"No one has been here seeking you. I have sat here all day," Mariana said.

Isabella now walked toward them.

"I always believe what you say," the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "The person I was going to meet has just shown up. Now I want you to leave us alone for a little while. I hope to let you know very soon about something that will bring some advantage to yourself."

"I am always bound to you and will obey you," Mariana said as she exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Isabella, "We are very well met, and you have well come at a welcome time. What is the news that you bring me from this good deputy?"

"He has a garden surrounded with a brick wall, whose western side has a vineyard. Leading into that vineyard is a gate made of wooden planks. I have two keys. The bigger key will open

that gate. The smaller key opens a little door that from the vineyard leads to the garden. I have promised to visit Angelo at the garden house during the drowsy middle of the night.”

“Do you have the knowledge that is needed to find this way and reach Angelo?”

“I have carefully noted and memorized the way,” Isabella replied. “Angelo whispered guiltily to me twice how to find the way there although he did not show me the way.”

“Is there anything else — such as a password — that you two have agreed upon that Mariana ought to know?”

“No, none,” Isabella replied. “We have agreed that the tryst should take place in the dark. I also told him that ‘my’ stay must necessarily be brief because, I said, I have a servant who will come along with me and wait for me. I said that this servant believes that I am visiting Angelo to talk to him about my brother.”

“This is well thought out,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “I have not yet made known to Mariana a word of this. So far, she knows nothing about our plan.”

He called, “Mariana, come here!”

Mariana walked toward the two.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to her, “Please, become acquainted with this maiden. She has come here to do something good for you.”

“What he said is true,” Isabella said.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Mariana, “Do you believe that I respect you and want to do good things for you?”

“Good friar, I know you do,” Mariana said. “I have always found that to be true.”

“Take, then, this woman, your new companion, by the hand. She has something to tell you. I will soon talk to you. Be quick; the damp nighttime is coming.”

Mariana asked Isabella, “Is it OK if we talk over here?”

They withdrew a short distance away and talked.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “Oh, people in high and great positions! Millions of evil eyes stare at you. Volumes of voices speak false and antagonistic things about your actions the way that a pack of dogs howl while following a false trail. A thousand foolish wits make you the subjects of their daydreams in which they stretch you on the rack.”

Mariana and Isabella had finished their conversation.

“Welcome,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Is there an agreement to follow this plan?”

“Mariana will take the enterprise upon her, father,” Isabella said, “if you advise it.”

“I do advise it, and I also urge you, Mariana, to do this.”

Isabella said to Mariana, “You have little to say. When you depart from him, say, softly and lowly, ‘Remember now my brother.’”

“Do not fear,” Mariana said. “I will remember to say it.”

“And, gentle daughter, don’t you fear anything at all,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Angelo is your husband on a pre-contract of marriage. To bring you together like this is no sin because the justice of your title to him outweighs the deceit.

“Come, let all of us go. Our corn’s yet to reap, for our seed’s yet to sow. We have much more to do before we can reap the harvest of our plan.”

— 4.2 —

The Provost and Pompey talked together in the prison.

“Come here,” the Provost said to Pompey. “Can you cut off a man’s head?”

“If the man is a bachelor, sir, I can, but if he is a married man, he is his wife’s head, and I could never cut off a woman’s head.”

Pompey was referring to Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is the wife’s head, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and the same is the Savior of his body.”

“Come, sir, set aside your quibbles, and give me a direct answer,” the Provost said. “This morning Claudio and Barnardine are scheduled to die. Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his job lacks a helper. If you will take it on yourself to assist him, it shall free you from your fetters; if not, you shall serve your full time of imprisonment and then you will be set free with a pitiless whipping, for you have been a notorious bawd.”

“Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd for longer than I can remember, but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instruction from my fellow partner.”

The Provost called the common executioner: “Abhorson! Where’s Abhorson?”

Abhorson, whose name combined the words “abhor” and “whoreson,” aka son of a whore, entered the room and asked, “Are you calling for me, sir?”

“Here’s a fellow who will help you tomorrow in your executions. If you think it suitable, make an agreement to employ him for the next year, and let him stay here with you. If you do not think it suitable, use him for the present and then dismiss him. Because he has been a bawd, he cannot plead that he is too good to be an executioner.”

“A bawd, sir? Damn him! He will discredit our mystery. He will discredit our skilled labor.”

In their society, “mystery” meant “skilled labor.” How to do the labor was a mystery to those who had not acquired the skills necessary to do it.

“Come on,” the Provost said. “Being an executioner and being a bawd have the same status — they weigh the same, and it takes a feather to make one side of the scales sink.”

The Provost exited.

Pompey said, “Please, sir, give me your good favor — and I am sure that you have good favor, although you have a hangdog look. Sir, do you call your occupation a mystery?”

“Yes, sir; it is a mystery,” Abhorson replied.

“Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery,” Pompey said, “and whores, sir, being members of my occupation, use painting, thereby proving my occupation a mystery.”

The painting an artist does is definitely skilled labor, but the kind of painting referred to by Pompey was the use of cosmetics.

Pompey continued, “What mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine.”

Abhorson repeated, “Sir, it is a mystery.”

“Give me proof,” Pompey requested. “Give me a good argument that it is a mystery.”

Abhorson attempted to do so:

“An executioner is a thief because he steals a man’s life.

“A thief steals clothing — and the executioner keeps the clothing of each person he executes.

“Every true man’s apparel fits the thief. If the clothing is too little [in size] for your thief, your true man thinks it big [valuable] enough. If the clothing is too big [in size] for your thief, your thief thinks it little [not as much as he would like to have] enough. Therefore, every true man’s apparel fits the thief.

“If the work of the thief is a mystery, then the work of the executioner is a mystery because the thief and the executioner are analogous.

“If the meaning of my words is mysterious to you, that is additional proof that the work of an executioner is a mystery.”

The Provost entered the room and asked Pompey, “Are you willing to be an executioner tomorrow?”

Pompey replied, “Sir, I will serve him. I find that being a hangman is a more penitent trade than being a bawd; he asks forgiveness more often.”

This was true. Before performing his duty, the executioner always asked the criminal to forgive him.

“You must provide your own chopping block and your own axe to do your duty — behead a criminal — tomorrow at four o’clock,” the Provost said to Pompey.

“Come on, bawd,” Abhorson said. “I will teach you the mysteries of my trade. Follow me.”

“I desire to learn, sir,” Pompey replied, “and I hope, if you have occasion to use me for your own turn, you shall find me ready; because truly, sir, for your kindness I owe you a good turn.”

One good turn deserves another. In their society, one of the meanings of the phrase “to turn” was “to execute.” Pompey was joking that if he ever had to execute the executioner that he would be ready to do it well.

The Provost ordered, “Tell Barnardine and Claudio to come and talk to me.”

Pompey and Abhorson departed to carry out the errand.

The Provost said to himself, "Claudio has my pity, but Barnardine, who is a murderer, gets not a jot of pity from me. If the murderer were my own brother, he would get no pity from me."

Claudio entered the room, and the Provost showed him a document and said, "Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for your death. It is now exactly midnight, and by eight in the morning your body must die and you must become an immortal spirit. Where's Barnardine?"

"He is as fast asleep as a guiltless laborer or a traveler with weary bones. He will not wake up."

"Who can have any good effect on him?" the Provost asked, not expecting a reply. He added, "Well, go; prepare yourself."

Knocking sounded.

The Provost said, "What is that noise?"

He then said to Claudio, "May Heaven give your spirits comfort!"

Claudio exited.

The Provost said, "Coming! I hope it is some pardon or reprieve for the most gentle Claudio."

The Provost did not have to answer the door because Duke Vincentio, still in disguise, opened it and entered the room.

"Welcome, father," the Provost said.

"May the best and most wholesome spirits of the night envelope you, good Provost! Who has come here recently?"

"No one has come here since the bell for curfew rang in the evening."

"Isabella has not been here?"

"No."

"Some people will arrive, then, before too much longer."

"Is there any possibility of a pardon or reprieve for Claudio?"

"There's always hope."

"Angelo is a severe and cruel deputy."

The disguised Duke Vincentio replied, "No, no. Angelo's life is consistent with the written and ruled decrees of his great justice. He subdues with holy abstinence the faults in himself that he spurs on his power to judge in others; were he stained with the same faults that he judges, then he would be a tyrant, but since he is without fault, he is a just ruler."

The disguised Duke Vincentio knew that Angelo, like all men, had sinned. Unlike some men, Angelo was also a hypocrite. However, the disguised Duke Vincentio expected that a pardon for Claudio would come at any minute. He expected Angelo to keep the promise that he had made to Isabella.

Knocking sounded.

“Now some people have come,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. He thought that the pardon had arrived.

The Provost exited, and the disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “This is a good and gentle Provost. It is seldom that the hardened jailer is the friend of prisoners and treats them well.”

More knocking sounded.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “What’s going on? That is quite a lot of noise. Whoever is wounding the unassisting and resisting back door with these strokes is possessed with haste and urgency.”

The Provost came back and said, “An officer will arrive with the key and let the knocker in. The knocker will have to stay outside until the officer arrives.”

“Have you no countermanding order for Claudio yet?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked the Provost. “Is he still scheduled to die?”

“I have received no countermanding order.”

“It is close to dawn,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said to the Provost, “but I tell you that you shall hear some news before morning.”

“I hope that you know something good,” the Provost replied, “yet I believe that no countermanding order will come. We have had no examples of leniency. Besides, on the very seat of judgment Lord Angelo has publicly said that there shall be no leniency for Claudio.”

A messenger entered the room; the officer the Provost had summoned had let him in.

The Provost said, “This is Lord Angelo’s messenger.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, “And here comes Claudio’s pardon.”

The messenger gave the Provost a piece of paper and said, “Lord Angelo has sent you this note; and by me he has sent this further order, that you swerve not from the smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or other circumstance. Good morning; for, as I take it, it is almost day.”

“I shall obey him,” the Provost replied.

The messenger exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *This is Claudio’s pardon, given by a pardoner who is guilty of the same sin as Claudio. Offense is quickly pardoned when high authority is guilty of that offense: When the guilty give pardons, a wide scope of pardons is given. Because the sin is loved, the sinner is befriended.*

He asked out loud, “Now, sir, what is the news?”

“It is exactly as I said earlier: Claudio will be given no pardon,” the Provost replied. “In fact, Lord Angelo, who seems to think that I will be remiss in doing my duty, awakens me with this unwonted urging to do my duty. I think that this is strange because he has never done this before.”

“Please, read the note to me.”

The Provost read the note out loud: *“No matter what you may hear to the contrary, have Claudio executed by four o’clock in the morning; and in the afternoon have Barnardine executed. To assure me that you have done your duty, send Claudio’s head to me by five. Let this be duly performed; be aware that more depends on it than we can tell you now. Therefore, do not fail to do your duty. If you fail to do it, you do so at your peril.”*

The Provost asked, “What do you think about this, sir?”

“Who is this Barnardine who is to be executed in the afternoon?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked.

“He was born in Bohemia, but he was raised here. He has been a prisoner for nine years.”

“Nine years! Why didn’t the absent Duke either set him free or execute him? I have heard that it was his custom to not long delay in such matters.”

“Barnardine’s friends constantly got reprieves for him, and until now, in the government of Lord Angelo, it was not definitely proven that he had committed the crime that he was accused of.”

“It has now been proven?”

“Most definitely, and he himself does not deny committing the crime.”

“Has he been penitent in prison?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked. “How has he been affected by being in prison?”

“He is a man who fears death no more dreadfully than he fears a drunken sleep; he is without worries, and he is reckless and fearless of what’s past, present, or to come. He is oblivious when it comes to life and death, and he is in a state of mortal sin.”

“He is in need of spiritual counsel.”

The Provost replied, “He will hear none. He has always been free to roam around the prison. If he had the opportunity to escape, he would not take it. He is drunk many times a day, and for many days he is entirely drunk. We have very often awakened him, as if we were going to take him to the place of his execution and showed him what seemed to be a warrant for his execution. This did not affect him at all.”

“I will ask more about him soon,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “I look at your brow, Provost, and I see honesty and resoluteness written there. If I am reading your brow incorrectly, my ancient skill and long experience is misleading me; however, with full confidence that I have read your brow correctly, I will take a risk and if I am wrong, put myself in jeopardy.”

“Claudio, whom here you have an order to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo is, who has sentenced him. Both of them are guilty of committing the same crime. To make you understand this with a clear demonstration that what I have said is true, I need a respite of only four days. To get me that respite, I want you to do for me both an immediate and a dangerous favor.”

“Please, sir, what favor?”

“I want you to delay death; I want you to not kill Claudio.”

“How dare I do that?” the Provost said. “The hour for his execution has been set, and I have a clear command, under penalty, to deliver his head to Angelo. Unless I carry out his order, I may find myself in Claudio’s position — Lord Angelo may have *me* executed!”

“By the vow of my order, I will protect you. Let my instructions be your guide. Let this Barnardine be executed this morning, and his head carried to Angelo.”

“Angelo has seen both Claudio and Barnardine, and he will know that it is Barnardine’s head.”

“Oh, death’s a great disguiser,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “and you can improve the disguise. Shave the head, and tie up the beard; and say that it was the desire of the penitent to have his head be so bared before his death. You know that before an execution the shaving of the head is commonly done — the person being executed wants the ax to quickly slice through the neck without being impeded by long hair. If anything should be the result of your action, other than thanks and good fortune, then by the saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life.”

“Pardon me, good father,” the Provost said. “Doing that is against my oath.”

“Who did you swear the oath to: the absent Duke, or the deputy?”

“To the Duke, and to his deputies.”

“Would you think that you have committed no offence, if Duke Vincentio were to avouch that what you did was just?”

“Yes, but what is the likelihood of that happening?”

“It is not a likelihood; it is a certainty,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Yet since I see that you are afraid, that my friar’s robes, integrity, and words cannot with ease persuade you to do this, I will go further than I meant to, so that I can pluck all fears out of you.”

He showed the Provost a document and said, “Look, sir, here is the handwriting and the seal of Duke Vincentio. You know his handwriting, I am sure; and his seal is not strange to you.”

“I know them both.”

“The contents of this document concern the return of Duke Vincentio. You shall soon read it at your pleasure, and you will find that within the next two days he will return here.

“Duke Vincentio’s return is something that Angelo does not know about because he this very day will receive letters containing extraordinary news. Perhaps he will read that Duke Vincentio is dead; perhaps he will read that Duke Vincentio has entered some monastery. However, he will not read that Duke Vincentio will return to Vienna in the next two days.

“Look, the morning star alerts the shepherd that it is time to take the sheep out of the fold and to pasture.

“Don’t allow yourself to be bewildered by all these things. Soon you will learn more, and you will understand. Call your executioner, and order him to behead Barnardine. I will give him an immediate confession and help prepare him to go to a better place.

“You are still bewildered, but soon all of your doubts will be completely resolved.

“Come, let’s go. It is almost clearly dawn.”

— 4.3 —

In another room of the prison, Pompey said to himself, “I know as many people here as I did when I was in our house of the oldest profession. One would think it was Mistress Overdone’s own house of prostitution, because here are many of her old customers.

“First, here’s young Master Rash; he rashly borrowed money from an unscrupulous lender who wanted more than the 10 percent interest allowed by law. To get around the law, the unscrupulous lender made Master Rash take part of the loan in commodity. Master Rash paid a certain price for the commodity and was supposed to sell the commodity for ready money. Master Rash paid the lender 197 pounds for brown paper and old, stale ginger, and he sold the brown paper and old, stale ginger for around three pounds. Ginger was not much in demand because the old women, who love ginger, were all dead.

“Then there is here one Master Caper, a dancer, at the suit of Master Threepile, the seller of velvet and fine cloth, for some four suits of peach-colored satin, who now impeaches him as a beggar because he cannot pay for the clothing.

“We also have here young Dizzy, the gambler at dice.

“We also have here young Master Deepvow. Quite a few people here deeply vow to pay back their debts if they are released from prison.

“We also have here young Master Copperspur, whose spurs are made of polished copper, which he hopes that a casual observer will mistake for gold.

“We also have here Master Starvelackey, the rapier-and-dagger man. He fights in the modern style, without a shield, and he is either too cheap or too impoverished to feed his servants well.

“We also have here young Dropheir, who killed fat, foolish Pudding. In addition to killing people, Dropheir takes advantage of young heirs, lending them money at usurious rates in anticipation of forthcoming inheritances. Often, the heir drops in wealth because of the loans.

“We also have here Master Forthright the tilter. He enjoys jousting with lances and charges forward on his horse.

“We also have here the brave Master Shoetie, the great traveller who ties his shoes with a yard and a quarter of ribbon in the most extravagant style.

“We also have here wild Halfcan, who drank half a beer, thought himself wildly drunk, and stabbed Pots, the server of beer.

“We also have here, I think, forty more people I know. All are great fornicators in our trade, and now they cry, ‘Give me food for the Lord’s sake,’ out the prison windows to passersby whom they hope will be charitable.”

Abhorson the executioner entered the room and said to Pompey, “Bring Barnardine here.”

Pompey shouted, “Master Barnardine! You must rise and be hanged. Master Barnardine!”

Abhorson also shouted, "Barnardine!"

Barnardine, who had been asleep, shouted back, "A pox on your throats! Go and catch the plague! Who is making that noise there? Who are you?"

"We are your friends, sir, including the hangman," Pompey replied. "You must be so good, sir, as to rise and be put to death."

Barnardine shouted back, "Go away, you rogue, go away! I am sleepy."

Abhorson said, "Tell him he must wake up, and that quickly, too."

Pompey shouted, "Please, Master Barnardine, wake up and stay awake until you are executed, and sleep afterwards."

Abhorson said, "Go in to him, and fetch him out."

"He is coming, sir, he is coming," Pompey said. "I hear the straw of his bed rustle."

"Is the axe upon the chopping block?" Abhorson asked.

"Everything is very ready, sir."

Barnardine entered the room and said, "How are you now, Abhorson? What's the news with you?"

"Truly, sir," Abhorson replied. "I want you to quickly start your prayers because, you see, the warrant for your execution has come."

"You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not ready to die," Barnardine said.

"Actually, you are very ready to die," Pompey said. "Anyone who drinks all night, and is hanged early in the morning, may sleep all the sounder the next day."

"Look, Barnardine, sir; here comes your ghostly — spiritual — father. Do you think now that we are jesting?"

Duke Vincentio, still disguised as a friar, entered the room and said to Barnardine, "Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart from this life, I have come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you."

"Friar, you do not need to advise, comfort, and pray with me," Barnardine said. "I have been drinking hard all night, and I demand to have more time to prepare myself to die. If they will not give me more time, then they will have to beat out my brains with cudgels. I will not consent to die this day, that's certain. Today I will not be hung or be beheaded."

"But, sir, you must," the disguised Duke Vincentio said, "and therefore I beg you to prepare for the journey you must go."

"I swear I will not die today no matter what any man says."

"Listen to me."

"Not a word," Barnardine replied. "If you have anything to say to me, come to my ward; for from there I will not go today."

Barnardine exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, "Barnardine is not fit either to live or to die. His stony heart is made of gravel! Go after him, fellows; bring him to the block so his head can be chopped off."

Abhorson and Pompey went after Barnardine.

The Provost entered the room and asked, "Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?"

The disguised Duke Vincentio replied, "Barnardine is a creature unprepared and unfit for death. To transport him in the mind and state he is in now would be damnable because he will certainly be damned."

The Provost said, "Here in the prison, father, there died this morning from a cruel fever a man named Ragozine, who was a most notorious pirate. He is the same age as Claudio; his beard and hair are the same color as Claudio's. What if we ignore this reprobate named Barnardine until he is well inclined and consents to die, and instead give Angelo the head of Ragozine, who resembles Claudio much more than Barnardine does?"

"Oh, this is a welcome accident that Heaven provides!" the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "Send Ragozine's head to Angelo quickly. The hour is quickly coming that Angelo set for Claudio's death. See that this is done and the head sent just as Angelo ordered you to do. Meanwhile, I will persuade this rude wretch to die willingly."

"This shall be done, good father, immediately," the Provost said. "But Barnardine must die this afternoon. How shall we keep Claudio alive *and* save me from the danger that might come if it were known that he is still alive?"

"Let this be done," the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "Put both Barnardine and Claudio in secret cells. Before the Sun has made his daily greeting in the morning twice to the people outside this prison, you shall most definitely find that you are safe from persecution by Angelo."

"I am your willing servant," the Provost said.

"Quick, do what needs to be done, and send the head of Ragozine to Angelo."

The Provost exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, "Now I will write letters to Angelo — the Provost shall carry the letters to him. The letters will tell Angelo that I am close to home, and that, for good reasons, I am bound to enter publicly. I will order Angelo to meet me at the consecrated spring a league from the city; and from there, coolly, step by step, and with due observance of all things necessary, we shall proceed with Angelo."

The Provost returned, carrying the head of Ragozine.

He said, "Here is the head; I'll carry it to Angelo myself."

"This is convenient," the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "Make a swift return because I want to talk with you about such things that no ears but yours should hear."

"I will return as quickly as I can."

He exited.

Isabella came to the door and said, "May Peace be found here!"

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, "That is the voice of Isabella. She's come to know if her brother's pardon has come here yet; however, I will keep her ignorant that her brother is still alive. I will change her despair to Heavenly comforts when she least expects it."

Duke Vincentio had a plan. He wanted Isabella to publicly accuse Angelo. In order for her to do that with the proper passion and fury, she would have to believe that Angelo had murdered her brother. That way, Angelo's crimes would be revealed.

Isabella entered the room and said, "Here I am, with your permission."

"Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter."

"The greeting is all the better because it was given to me by so holy a man," Isabella replied. "Has Angelo sent my brother's pardon yet?"

"Angelo has released Claudio, Isabella, from the world: An axe took off his head, which has been sent to Angelo."

"No!" Isabella shrieked. "That is not possible!"

"Nothing else has occurred but what I told you," the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "Show that you are wise, daughter, by quietly enduring this."

"Oh, I will go to Angelo and pluck out his eyes!" she said, crying.

"You shall not be admitted to his sight."

"Unhappy Claudio! Wretched Isabella! Injurious world! Most damned Angelo!"

"This neither hurts him nor helps you even a little," the disguised Duke Vincentio said. "Stop crying out therefore; give your cause to Heaven. Listen to what I say, every syllable of which you shall find to be faithful and true.

"Duke Vincentio is coming home to Vienna — Isabella, dry your tears. A member of our convent, who is Duke Vincentio's confessor, told me this news. Already he has carried notice of Duke Vincentio's return to Escalus and Angelo, who are preparing to meet him at the gates of Vienna. There they will give up their power. If you can, put your wisdom on that good path that I would wish it to go. If you do, you shall get what your heart most desires. You will punish Angelo, get the friendship of Duke Vincentio, get as much revenge as you want, and gain general honor."

"I will do as you wish," Isabella replied.

The disguised Duke Vincentio gave her a letter and said, "Give this letter to Friar Peter. It is he who sent me news of Duke Vincentio's return. Say, by this token, that I desire his company at Mariana's house tonight. Her cause and yours I'll give him full information about, and he shall bring you before Duke Vincentio, and you can accuse Angelo of all his crimes while you are face to face with him.

“As for my poor self, I am strongly bound by a sacred vow and shall be absent. Go now with this letter. Take command of your cheek-staining tears and give yourself a light heart. Never trust my holy order, if I have misled you about what will happen.”

He heard a noise and asked, “Who’s here?”

Lucio entered the room and said, “Good day, all. Friar, where’s the Provost?”

“He is not here, sir.”

Lucio said, “Oh, pretty Isabella, I am pale at heart to see your eyes so red. You must control yourself.

“I myself am compelled to dine and sup with water and bran; it is my punishment for lechery. I dare not fill my belly because of the punishment that would await me — I would lose my head. One good and fruitful meal would make me horny, and another act of lechery would make me headless. Truly, Isabella, I loved and respected your brother. If the old and eccentric Duke Vincentio — a Duke who knew dark corners — had been in Vienna, your brother would still be alive.”

Isabella exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Lucio, “Sir, the Duke would thank you but little for your reports of his doings in dark corners; the best thing about them is that they are completely incorrect.”

“Friar, you don’t know Duke Vincentio as well as I do. He’s a better woodman — chaser of skirts — than you take him for.”

“Well, you’ll pay the penalty for what you say about him one day. Fare you well.”

“No, wait; I’ll go along with you and give you company,” Lucio replied. “I can tell you pretty tales about Duke Vincentio.”

“You have told me too many stories about him already, sir, if they are true; if they are not true, none would have been enough.”

“I once appeared in court before him for getting a wench with child,” Lucio said.

“Were you guilty?”

“Yes, I was, but I lied about it under oath. I was forced to lie; otherwise, they would have married me to the rotten medlar.”

The word “medlar” was used as a term for prostitutes. A medlar was an apple that was eaten when it was half-rotten.

“Sir, your company is fairer than honest,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “You dress better than you speak. Rest you well.”

“Indeed, I’ll go with you to the lane’s end,” Lucio replied. “If bawdy talk offends you, we’ll have very little of it. Friar, I am a kind of burr; I shall stick to you.”

Angelo and Escalus talked in a room in Angelo's house.

Escalus said, "Every letter that Duke Vincentio has written has contradicted the letters we have previously received from him."

Claudio replied, "The letters are written in a very uneven and distracted manner. His actions seem to be those of a madman. Let's pray to Heaven that he is not afflicted with a mental disease! And why are we supposed to meet him at the gates and give back to him our commissions and authorities there?"

"I can't imagine."

"And why should we proclaim his return an hour before his entering the city gates, so that if anyone craves redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?"

"He has explained his reasons for that," Escalus said. "He wants to deal with all complaints as soon as he returns. That way, no one will be able to bring them up later."

One reason to deal with complaints earlier instead of later is so that no one could say that Angelo and Escalus had time in which to secretly influence Duke Vincentio to rule in their favor.

"Well, I say to you, let it be proclaimed early in the morning. I'll call upon you at your house. Give notice to such men of high rank and with a retinue of servants as are to meet him."

"I shall, sir. Fare you well," Escalus said.

"Good night," Angelo said.

Escalus exited.

Angelo said to himself, "My evil deed destroys me utterly, and it makes me slow-witted and dull to all proceedings. A deflowered maiden! And deflowered by an eminent person — me — who is charged with enforcing the law against fornication! Except that her tender shame will not allow her to announce publicly that she has lost her virginity, how she could accuse me! Yet reason tells her not to dare to accuse me because my authority as Duke Vincentio's deputy bears such respect and belief that no scandal aimed at me can touch me; instead, the person who charges me with such a scandal will be the one confounded.

"Claudio should have continued to live, except that this riotous youth, with his dangerous passion, might in time to come have taken revenge against me because his dishonored life was ransomed in such a shameful way. But I wish that he were still alive! When we once forget the knowledge of morality that God implanted in us, nothing goes right: We would, and we would not."

Angelo was thinking of Romans 7:19: "For I do not the good thing, which I would, but the evil, which I would not, that do I."

— 4.5 —

In the fields outside Vienna, Duke Vincentio, who was NOT disguised, and Friar Peter talked.

"At the suitable time, deliver these letters for me," Duke Vincentio said, handing Friar Peter some letters.

Using the royal plural, he continued: "Like you, the Provost knows our purpose and our plot. The plot now being put in action, follow your instructions and always keep in mind the plan that I have formed, although sometimes you may have to swerve from it a little as called for by circumstances.

"Go to Flavius' house, and tell him where I am staying. Give the same information to Valencius, Rowland, and Crassus, and tell them to bring the trumpeters to the gate, but send me Flavius first."

"I shall do it speedily," Friar Peter said.

He departed to carry out his errands.

Varrius, one of Duke Vincentio's friends, walked over to him.

Duke Vincentio said, "I thank you, Varrius; you have made good time. Come, we will walk. Some other of our friends will greet us here soon, my gentle Varrius."

— 4.6 —

On a street near the city gates, Isabella and Mariana were talking.

"I am loath to speak so inaccurately," Isabella said. "I must allow Angelo to think that he deflowered me. You are the one who must accuse Angelo truthfully. I myself must accuse Angelo incorrectly of deflowering me, Friar Peter said, in order to keep hidden our full plan."

"Do what Friar Peter advises you to do," Mariana said.

"In addition, Friar Peter tells me that if perhaps he should speak against me and seem to be on Angelo's side, that I should not think it strange because it is a medicine that is bitter to swallow but will lead to a sweet end."

"I wish that Friar Peter —" Mariana said.

"Look!" Isabella interrupted. "Here he comes!"

Friar Peter walked over to the two women and said, "Come with me, I have found you a place to stand that is most suitable. You will be in such a position that Duke Vincentio cannot ignore you and pass by you.

"Twice have the trumpets sounded; the highly born and gravest citizens have taken up their positions at the gates, and very soon Duke Vincentio will pass through the gates. Hurry! Let's go!"

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

At the city gate stood Friar Peter, Isabella, and Mariana, who was veiled. Passing through the city gate were Duke Vincentio, Varrius, and some lords. Waiting for Duke Vincentio were Angelo and Escalus. Also present were the Provost, Lucio, many lords, many officers, and many citizens.

Duke Vincentio greeted Angelo, “My very worthy cousin, we are fairly met!”

The two men were not biological cousins; this was simply a courteous way for two noblemen to refer to each other.

Duke Vincentio then greeted Escalus, “Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see you.”

Angelo and Escalus replied together, “May your return bring happiness to your royal grace!”

“I give many and hearty thanks to you both. We have made inquiry about you; and we hear such good things about your justice that I must give you public thanks now, with further reward to follow later.”

“You make my obligations to you still greater,” Angelo said.

Duke Vincentio replied, “Oh, your desert speaks loudly; and I would wrong it if I were to lock it secretly away in my heart. Your merit deserves to be emblazoned in letters made of brass — a fortified residence against the tooth of time that devours everything and against the erasure that oblivion makes. Your good deeds and justice ought to be remembered. Give me your hand, and let my subjects see me grasping your hand. That way they will know that these outward courtesies would like to proclaim favors that are hidden within my heart.”

Duke Vincentio then said, “Come, Escalus, you must walk by us on our other side.”

He added, “You two are good supporters.”

Friar Peter and Isabella then came forward.

Friar Peter said to Isabella, “Now is the right time: Speak loudly and kneel before Duke Vincentio.”

“I ask for justice, royal Duke!” Isabella shouted. “Look down upon a wronged — I would like to have said a virgin! Oh, worthy Prince, do not dishonor your eyes by looking at any other object until you have heard me make my true complaint and you have given me justice, justice, justice, justice!”

Duke Vincentio said, “Tell me your wrongs. In what have you been wronged? By whom have you been wronged? Be brief. Here is Lord Angelo, who shall give you justice. Reveal your complaint to him.”

“Oh, worthy Duke Vincentio,” Isabella said. “You ask me to seek redemption from the Devil. Hear me yourself because that which I must speak about must either punish me, if I am not believed, or wring redress from you. Hear me! Oh, hear me, here and now!”

“My lord, her wits, I fear, are not firm,” Angelo said. “She is mentally unbalanced. She has pleaded to me for her brother’s life, which was cut short by course of justice —”

“By course of justice!” Isabella, outraged, shouted.

“— and she will speak most bitterly and strangely against me,” Angelo finished.

“Most strangely, but yet most truly, will I speak,” Isabella said. “Angelo is guilty of perjury; is it not strange? Angelo is a murderer; is it not strange? Angelo is an adulterous thief, a hypocrite, a virgin-violator; are not these things strange?”

“These things are ten times strange,” Duke Vincentio replied.

“It is not truer that he is Angelo than that this is all as true as it is strange. In fact, it is ten times true; for truth is truth to the ultimate degree.”

“Take her away!” Duke Vincentio said. “Poor soul, she is saying these things because she is insane.”

“Oh, Prince, I beg you, as you believe that there is another comfort than this world — a life after death — please do not neglect and ignore what I say because you believe that I am insane! Do not consider impossible that which only seems to be unlikely. It is not impossible that someone, the wickedest villain on Earth, may seem to be as cautious, as grave, as just, as perfect as Angelo. Likewise, Angelo, in all his robes of office, his insignia, his titles, and his ceremonies, may be an arch-villain. Believe it, royal Prince. If he is less evil than I say he is, he is nothing, but he is more evil than I say he is — I lack more words to describe his evilness.”

Duke Vincentio said, “By my honesty, if she is mad — as I believe to be a fact — her madness has the most remarkable coherence of meaning, such a remarkable relationship and connection between one thing and another thing. This is the best logical thinking that I have heard come from an insane person.”

“Oh, gracious Duke,” Isabella said. “Do not insist that I am insane, and do not banish rational arguments because they do not agree with what most people think about Angelo. Instead, let your reason serve to make the truth appear from where it is hidden, and hide the falsehood that seems to be true.”

“Many who are not mad have, surely, a greater lack of reason,” Duke Vincentio said. “What do you want to say to me?”

“I am the sister of a man named Claudio,” Isabella said. “Because of his act of fornication, he was condemned by Angelo to lose his head. My brother sent me, a novice in a sisterhood, to Angelo. A man named Lucio was my brother’s messenger to me —”

Lucio interrupted, “That’s me, if it may please your grace. I came to her from Claudio, and I urged her to try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo to attempt to gain her poor brother’s pardon.”

“He is the man indeed,” Isabella said.

“You were not told to speak,” Duke Vincentio said to Lucio.

“No, my good lord,” Lucio replied, “nor was I told to stay silent.”

“I tell you now to stay silent,” Duke Vincentio said. “Please, take note of it, and when you have a matter that concerns you, then pray to Heaven that you know your part well.”

“I warrant your honor that I will,” Lucio said.

By “warrant,” Lucio meant “guarantee.”

“If I so order it, the warrant will be for yourself; take heed and be careful,” Duke Vincentio said.

By “warrant,” Duke Vincentio meant “an order to arrest someone.”

Isabella said, “This gentleman told part of my tale —”

Again, Lucio interrupted, “Right.”

Duke Vincentio said, “It may be right, but you are in the wrong when you speak before your time.”

He said to Isabella, “Proceed.”

“I went to this pernicious and contemptible deputy named Angelo —”

“That’s somewhat madly spoken,” Duke Vincentio said.

“Pardon my language,” Isabella said. “The words are appropriate and relevant to the subject matter.”

“The apparent madness of speech has been amended again,” Duke Vincentio said. “Come to the point. Proceed.”

“In brief, setting aside the parts I need not tell, such as how I tried to persuade him, how I prayed to him and kneeled to him, how he denied my request, and how I replied — for all of this took much time — I now begin with grief and shame to tell you the vile conclusion. He would not, except but by gift of my chaste and virgin body to his lascivious and intemperate lust, release my brother; and, after much thought, my sisterly compassion overcame my honor, and I yielded my body to him, but early the next morning, his sexual desire having been satisfied, he sent an order to have my brother beheaded.”

“This is very believable!” Duke Vincentio said sarcastically.

“I wish that it were as believable as it is true!” Isabella replied.

“By Heaven, foolish wretch, you do not know what you are saying, or else you have been induced to give false witness in a hateful conspiracy against Angelo’s honor,” Duke Vincentio said. “First, his integrity stands without blemish. Next, it is not rational that with such vehemence he should punish faults that he has himself committed. If he had so offended, he would have judged your brother the way he judges himself and would not have had him killed. Someone has made you do this. Confess the truth, and say by whose advice you came to lodge a complaint against Angelo.”

“And is this all the justice I will get?” Isabella said. “Then, you blessed guardian angels above, help me to be patient, and at the right time reveal the evil that is here hidden behind the

perpetrator's position and privilege. May Heaven shield your grace from woe, as I, thus wronged, hence unbelieved go!"

"I know you would like to go," Duke Vincentio said. "An officer! To prison with her! Shall we thus permit an infectious and scandalous breath to fall on Angelo, who is so near and dear to us? This must be a plot. Who knew of your purpose and your coming hither?"

"One whom I wish were here: Friar Lodowick," Isabella replied.

Friar Lodowick was the name that Duke Vincentio used when he was disguised as a friar.

"A ghostly father, probably," Duke Vincentio said. "Who knows this Lodowick?"

The word "ghostly" was ambiguous. It could mean spiritual — or nonexistent.

"My lord, I know him," Lucio replied. "He is a meddling friar; I do not like the man. If he had been a layman, my lord, I would have beaten him soundly because of certain words that he spoke against your grace while you were away from Vienna."

"Words against me?" Duke Vincentio said. "He is a 'good' friar, it seems! And he set on this wretched woman here against Angelo, our deputy! Let this friar be found."

"Only yesterday at night, my lord, I saw her and that friar at the prison. He is a saucy friar, a very impudent and bad fellow."

Friar Peter spoke up and addressed Duke Vincentio: "Blessed be your royal grace! I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard your royal ear abused with lies. First, this woman — Isabella — has very wrongfully accused your deputy, Angelo, who is as free from sexual contact or soil with her as she is free from sexual contact or soil with someone who has not yet been born."

"We believe no less than that," Duke Vincentio said. "Do you know that Friar Lodowick whom she speaks of?"

"I know him to be a man who is divine and holy; he is not scurvy, and he is not a meddler in temporal affairs as this gentleman reported him to be. And, I very definitely know, he is a man who has never said bad things about your grace, as this gentleman reported."

"My lord, Friar Lodowick said the most villainous things about you; believe it," Lucio said.

"Well, Friar Lodowick in time may come to clear himself," Friar Peter said, "but right now he is sick, my lord, of a strange fever. Upon his request, and his request only, because he knew that there would be a complaint made against Lord Angelo, I came here so that I could speak, as if from his mouth, what he knows to be true and what he knows to be false, and what he with his oath and all proofs will make completely clear, whenever he's summoned to appear before you. First, however, let's address the charge made by this woman named Isabella. This worthy nobleman Angelo, whom she so publicly and personally accused, shall be defended. You shall hear what she said disproved in her presence, and she herself shall admit that what she said was untrue."

"Good friar, let's hear the evidence," Duke Vincentio said.

Mariana, still veiled, stepped forward, as guards took Isabella away.

Duke Vincentio said, "Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo? Oh, Heaven, the vanity of wretched fools!"

He ordered some attendants, "Give us some seats."

He then said, "Cousin Angelo, in this I'll be impartial. I'll let you be the judge in your own case."

He then said, "Is this the witness, Friar Peter? First, let her show her face, and afterward speak."

"Pardon me, my lord," Mariana said. "I will not show my face until my husband asks me to."

"What, are you married?" Duke Vincentio asked.

"No, my lord."

"Are you a virgin?"

"No, my lord."

"A widow, then?"

"Not that, either, my lord."

"Why, you are nothing then: not a virgin, not a widow, and not a wife."

"My lord, she may be a punk," Lucio said, "for many of them are not a maiden, widow, or wife."

"Punk" was a slang word for "prostitute."

"Silence that fellow," Duke Vincentio said. "I wish he had some cause to prattle for himself. He would have cause if he were on trial."

"True, my lord," Lucio said.

"My lord," Mariana said, "I do confess I never was married, and I confess besides that I am no virgin. I have known in the Biblical sense my husband, and yet my husband does not know that he has ever known me."

"He was drunk then, my lord," Lucio said. "It can be nothing else."

"For the benefit of silence, I wish that you were sleeping off a drunk, too!"

"That would keep me quiet, my lord," Lucio said.

"This is no witness for Lord Angelo," Duke Vincentio said. "She has said nothing about him."

"Now I come to the point, my lord," Mariana said. "Isabella, the woman who accuses Angelo of fornication, also in exactly the same way accuses my husband, and charges him, my lord, with committing fornication at such a time that I will swear I had him in my arms as he and I made love."

Angelo asked, "Does Isabella accuse more men than me of committing fornication with her?"

"Not that I know of," Mariana replied.

“No?” Duke Vincentio said. “You say that she accused your husband.”

“Why, that is true, my lord, and my husband is Angelo, who thinks he knows that he never knew my body, but who knows he thinks that he knows Isabella’s body.”

“This is a strange charge,” Angelo said. “Let’s see your face.”

Mariana replied, “My husband tells me to show my face; now I will take off my veil.”

She took off her veil and then said, “This is that face, cruel Angelo, that once you swore was worth looking at. This is the hand that, with a vowed contract, was fast locked in yours. This is the body that took away the assignation from Isabella, and this is the body that sexually satisfied you in your garden house. You thought that you were sleeping with Isabella, but you were actually sleeping with me.”

“Do you know this woman?” Duke Vincentio asked Angelo.

“Carnally, she says,” Lucio said.

“Shut up!” Duke Vincentio ordered.

“I have said enough, my lord,” Lucio replied.

“My lord, I must confess that I know this woman,” Angelo said. “Five years ago she and I talked about marriage, but the engagement was broken off, in part because the dowry that was promised was not supplied, but mainly because her reputation was ruined because of her lack of chastity — she had light heels, as they said. Since five years ago, I swear upon my faith and honor that I have not spoken to her, seen her, or heard from her.”

“Noble Prince,” Mariana said, “as there comes light from Heaven and words from breath, as there is sense in truth and truth in virtue, I am affianced this man’s wife as strongly as words could make up vows. In addition, my good lord, just last Tuesday night in his garden house he knew me in the Biblical sense as a wife.”

The pre-marriage contract between Angelo and Mariana was one that could be broken if the dowry was not paid as agreed, or if the woman was unchaste; however, if the man and woman had sexual relations together, then the two were legally obliged to get married.

Mariana continued: “Since these things are true, let me with safety rise up from my knees or else forever be fixed here — a marble monument!”

Angelo said, “I have until now only smiled contemptuously, but now, my good lord, I ask that you give me the scope and power of justice. My patience here is wounded and irritated. I see that these poor strangely behaving women are no more than the instruments of some mightier member of a conspiracy that sets them on to make these charges against me. Let me have the power, my lord, to uncover this conspiracy.”

“Yes, with all my heart,” Duke Vincentio said. “Punish them as you please. You foolish friar and you pernicious woman, who are in a plot with Isabella, do you think that your oaths, even if you would swear on each and every saint, would be believable testimonies against Angelo’s worth and credit that are ratified by proof?”

“You, Lord Escalus, sit with Angelo; lend him your kind help to find out this abusive plot and its source. There is another friar — Friar Lodowick — who made these women make their

complaint against Angelo. Let him be sent for.”

“I wish that he were here, my lord!” Friar Peter said, “because he indeed had these women make this complaint. Your Provost knows the place where Friar Lodowick lives, and he can fetch him.”

“Go do it immediately,” Duke Vincentio ordered.

The Provost exited.

Duke Vincentio said, “And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin Angelo, whom it most concerns to hear this matter, do to those who injure you as seems to you best. Give them whatever chastisement you wish. I will leave you for a while. Do not leave until you have well determined how you will treat these slanderers.”

Escalus said, “My lord, we’ll do our job as judges thoroughly.”

Duke Vincentio exited.

Escalus asked, “Signior Lucio, didn’t you say that you knew that Friar Lodowick is a dishonest person?”

Lucio replied, “*Cucullus non facit monachum*,” which is Latin for “The cowl does not make the monk.”

He added, “Friar Lodowick is honest in nothing except in his clothes; he has spoken the most villainous speeches about Duke Vincentio.”

“We shall ask you to stay here until he comes so that you can make these charges against him,” Escalus said. “This friar seems to be a notoriously bad fellow.”

“As any in Vienna, I swear,” Lucio said.

“Bring Isabella here again,” Escalus said. “I want to speak with her.”

An attendant left to get Isabella.

Escalus said to Angelo, “Please, my lord, allow me to question her; you shall see how I’ll handle her.”

Escalus meant that he would handle her by asking her questions that would reveal the truth, but Lucio pretended to take “handle” in a different — physical — sense.

Lucio said, “You will handle her no better than Angelo, by her own report.”

“What did you say?” Escalus asked. “What do you mean?”

“Sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would sooner confess. Perhaps, if you handle her publicly, she’ll be ashamed.”

“I will go darkly to work on her,” Escalus said.

He meant that the questions would be cunningly designed to trap her and force her to tell the truth. Lucio pretended that “darkly” meant “secretly” and “in the dark.”

Lucio said, “That’s the way; for women are light at midnight.”

The word “light” meant unchaste. Light heels were raised in the air in a position for having sex.

Isabella returned, escorted by officers.

“Come here, Mistress Isabella,” Escalus said. “Here is a gentlewoman who denies everything that you have said.”

The Provost returned, accompanied by Duke Vincentio, who was once again disguised as a friar: Friar Lodowick.

Lucio said, “My lord, here comes the rascal friar I spoke about, escorted by the Provost.”

“He arrives at a very good time,” Escalus said. “Do not speak to him until we ask you to.”

“I am mum,” Lucio replied.

Escalus said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “Come, sir, did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo? They have confessed you did.”

“It is false.”

“What! Do you know where you are?”

“I give respect to your great position in society,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, adding, “Let the Devil sometimes be honored for his burning throne. Normally, we would not honor the Devil, but he has a great position in Hell so sometimes we ought to honor him because of his great position. Where is the Duke? He is the person who should hear me speak.”

“The authority of the Duke is invested in us,” Escalus said, “and we will hear you speak. Be sure that you speak justly and truly.”

“Boldly, at least,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “But, poor souls, have you come here to ask the fox to give you the sheep? You may say goodbye to your redress — your remedy for a wrong! You will not be able to set things right by acting like this. Is the Duke gone? Then your cause — justice — has been lost, too. The Duke is unjust when he rejects your obviously just appeal — you, Escalus, want justice — and he instead allows the villain whom here you have come to accuse to do the judging in this trial.”

Duke Vincentio, while still in disguise, was pointing out that with Angelo acting as judge, justice would not be the result, although Escalus was sincerely attempting to find out the truth and be just. In this particular case, Angelo should be the accused, not the judge.

Lucio said, “This is the rascal; this is the man I spoke of.”

“Why, you unreverend and unhallowed friar,” Escalus said, “is it not enough that you have suborned these women to falsely accuse this worthy man, Angelo, but with a foul mouth and in his hearing, you call him a villain? And then you turn from him to Duke Vincentio himself and accuse the Duke of injustice?”

He ordered some officers, “Take him away; to the rack with him!”

He looked at the disguised Duke Vincentio and said, “We’ll stretch you joint by joint,” and then he added so that everyone could hear, “and we will know his purpose.”

In a disgusted voice, he said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “What! You call Duke Vincentio unjust!”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, “Don’t be so angry. The Duke will not dare to stretch this finger of mine any more than he would dare to rack his own finger. I am not his subject, and I am not subject to the local ecclesiastical jurisdiction. My business in this state has made me an observer here in Vienna, where I have seen corruption boil and bubble until it over-ran the stew pots. You have laws for all faults, but the faults are so ignored and covered up that the strong laws are like the rules posted in a barbershop: They are as much mocked as they are respected.”

Barbershops often posted rules on their walls. For example, if someone misbehaved, the punishment might be the pulling of a tooth. The punishments were meant to provoke laughter — no one dealt them out.

“You have slandered the state!” an outraged Escalus said. “Take him to prison!”

“What can you testify against him, Signior Lucio?” Angelo asked. “Is this the man whom you told us about?”

“He is the man, my lord,” Lucio said. “Come here, goodman baldpate. Do you know me?”

Lucio called the disguised Duke Vincentio “baldpate” because friars shaved their heads. Duke Vincentio wore a cowl, aka hood, as part of his disguise, and while he was in disguise he kept the hood up to help hide his face.

“I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

The hood kept people from seeing the disguised Duke Vincentio’s face, but it also interfered with the Duke’s seeing other people’s faces.

The disguised Duke Vincentio continued, “I met you at the prison, while the Duke was absent.”

“Oh, did you?” Lucio said. “And do you remember what you said about the Duke?”

“Very definitely, sir.”

“Do you, sir?” Lucio asked. “And do you remember calling the Duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward?”

“You must, sir, change places with me, before you make that my report,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “You, indeed, called him those things, and others very much worse.”

“Oh, you damnable fellow!” Lucio, an inveterate liar, said. “Didn’t I grab you by the nose because of what you said?”

“I say that I love the Duke as I love myself,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

“Listen to what the villain is saying now, after having said his treasonable abuses!” Angelo said.

“We need not talk any longer to him,” Escalus said. “Take him to prison! Where is the Provost? Take this friar to prison! Put plenty of fetters on him. Let him speak no more. Take

these giglots — these loose women — away, too, and take away the other confederate companion: Friar Peter!”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to the Provost, “Wait, sir. Wait a while.”

Angelo said, “What! Is he resisting arrest? Help arrest him, Lucio.”

“Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir,” Lucio said. “Damn, sir! Why, you baldpated, lying rascal, you think that you must be hooded, must you? Show us your knave’s visage, with a pox on you! Show us your sheep-biting face, and be hanged for an hour! I bet that your hood will come off!”

Lucio pulled down Friar Lodowick’s hood, and everyone recognized Duke Vincentio, who said to Lucio, “You are the first knave who ever made a Duke.”

Normally, when someone is made a Duke, a member of royalty performs the ceremony, but Lucio, a knave, had made a friar a Duke.

Duke Vincentio said, “First, Provost, let me bail out these gentle three. Isabella, Mariana, and Friar Peter are all innocent.”

Lucio attempted to stealthily leave, but Duke Vincentio said to him, “Sneak not away, sir, because Friar Lodowick and you must have a word soon. Lay hold of him and keep him here.”

Lucio said, “This may prove worse to me than hanging.”

Duke Vincentio said to Escalus, “What you have spoken to me, I pardon. Sit down. I will take Angelo’s chair.”

He then said to Angelo, “Sir, by your leave.”

Angelo stood up, and the Duke sat down.

Duke Vincentio said to Angelo, “Do you have any words, or intelligence, or impudence, that can still do you service? What kind of defense can you make of your actions? If you can make a defense, rely upon it until I tell my story, and then realize that you can make no defense. At that time, confess.”

“Oh, my dread lord,” Angelo said. “I would be guiltier than my guiltiness if I were to think I can hide my crimes when I perceive that your grace, like power divine, has looked upon them. Therefore, good Prince, no longer let a trial be held and expose my shame. Instead, let my trial be my own confession. All I beg from your grace now is immediate sentencing and death.”

Duke Vincentio said, “Come here, Mariana.”

He asked Angelo, “Tell me, were you ever contracted to marry this woman?”

“I was, my lord.”

“Go and take her away from here, and marry her immediately,” Duke Vincentio said. “Friar Peter, you perform the marriage. Once these two are married, bring Angelo back here again. Go with him, Provost.”

Angelo, Mariana, Friar Peter, and the Provost exited.

Escalus said, “My lord, I am more amazed at Angelo’s dishonor than at the strangeness of it. I did not think that he was capable of such sin.”

“Come here, Isabella,” Duke Vincentio said. “Your friar is now your Prince. As a friar, I was attentive and devoted to you, and I did my best to help you. I have changed from friar to Duke, but I have not changed my heart. I am still attentive and devoted to you, and I will do my best to help you.”

“Give me pardon,” Isabella said. “I, your vassal, have caused you pain and trouble.”

“You are pardoned, Isabella,” Duke Vincentio said. “And now, dear maiden, please be as generous to us. Your brother’s death, I know, sits at your heart, and you may wonder why I kept my identity and power hidden as I worked to save his life, instead of simply revealing my identity and power. Because I kept them hidden, your brother was lost.”

Of course, Duke Vincentio was lying. Soon he would reveal that Claudio, Isabella’s brother, was still alive. By concealing that fact now, he would make Isabella’s future happiness greater when she learned that her brother was still alive. In addition, and more importantly, he wanted Angelo to know the enormity of his sin.

Duke Vincentio continued: “Oh, most kind maiden, his death occurred too quickly. I did not think that he would be executed with such swift celerity. It knocked my plan in the head and ruined it. But may peace be with him! A life is a better life when it need not fear death. A life that lives but fears death is not as good. Your brother is enjoying Heaven and will never again die. Let this be your comfort: Your brother is happy in Heaven.”

“I am comforted by that, my lord,” Isabella replied.

Angelo, Mariana, Friar Peter, and the Provost returned. Angelo and Mariana were now married.

Duke Vincentio said to Isabella, “For Mariana’s sake, you must pardon this newly married man who is approaching here, whose lecherous imagination wronged your well-defended honor. He violated you in his imagination although not in reality. But he condemned your brother to death. This made him guilty of two things: violation of sacred chastity, and violation and breach of his promise to set your brother free. By breaching his promise to set your brother free, he became guilty of taking the life of your brother. Because of that crime, the very mercy of the law cries out very audibly, even from Angelo’s own tongue, ‘An Angelo for a Claudio, a death for a death! Haste always repays haste, and leisure answers leisure. Like requites like, and MEASURE always FOR MEASURE.’”

Duke Vincentio was remembering Exodus 21:23-25: “But if death follow, then thou shalt pay life for life. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

He was correct when he said that “the very mercy of the law cries out very audibly, even from Angelo’s own tongue, ‘An Angelo for a Claudio, a death for a death!’”

Earlier, Angelo had said this to Isabella: “I show pity most of all when I show justice because when I show justice I pity those whom I do not know, people whom an unpunished offence would afterwards gall and harm. A criminal who is not punished will commit the same crime again. I also show pity and do right to an offender who, because he is punished for committing

one foul wrong, does not live to commit another foul wrong. Be satisfied and restrain yourself. Your brother dies tomorrow. Reconcile yourself to his death.”

Duke Vincentio continued: “Angelo, your guilt is evident, and even if you were to ask for mercy, your guilt would still require that you die. We condemn you to go to the very block where Claudio stooped to be beheaded, and with similar haste.”

He ordered, “Take Angelo away to be beheaded!”

Mariana said, “Oh, my most gracious lord, I hope you will not mock me by giving me a husband and immediately taking him away from me.”

“It is your husband who mocked you with a husband,” Duke Vincentio said. “I want to safeguard your honor, and so I thought it fit that you marry Angelo. Otherwise, the news that he has had sex with you might give you a bad reputation and hurt your future life.

“As for his possessions, although they are forfeited to the state because Angelo is a felon, we give them to you along with all widow’s rights. Buy yourself a better husband.”

“My dear lord,” Mariana replied. “I crave no other man, and I crave no better man, than Angelo.”

“Do not crave him,” Duke Vincentio said. “We have made up our mind that he shall die.”

“My gentle liege —” Mariana began, kneeling.

Duke Vincentio interrupted, “You are wasting your words.”

He ordered again, “Take Angelo away so that he may die!”

He then said to Lucio, “Now, sir, I turn my attention to you.”

“My good lord!” Mariana said.

She then said, “Sweet Isabella, take my part. Lend me your knees, and all my life to come I’ll lend you all my life to do you service.”

“You are asking Isabella to do something that goes against all sense and reason,” Duke Vincentio said. “If she were to kneel down and beg mercy for Angelo, her brother’s ghost would break out of the stone of his tomb and take her away in horror of her actions.”

“Isabella, sweet Isabella,” Mariana begged, “please kneel by me. Hold up your hands, say nothing. I’ll speak all that needs to be said. People say that the best men are molded out of faults; their sins keep them from being proud of their virtues. For this reason, and for the most part, they become much better as a result of being a little bad. My husband may also become better as a result of his faults. Oh, Isabella, will you not lend a knee?”

Duke Vincentio said to Isabella, “Angelo dies because he caused Claudio’s death.”

Isabella remembered the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:38-39: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” New Testament justice is often tempered by mercy.

She said, “Most bounteous sir,” and then she knelt.

She continued: "If it please you, look on Angelo, who is condemned by you to die, as if my brother had lived. I in part think that a due sincerity governed Angelo's deeds, until he looked at me and was tempted to sin. Since that is the case, let Angelo not die. My brother received only justice, in that he did the thing for which he died. My brother committed fornication, and he was sentenced to die because he was guilty of fornication.

"As for Angelo, his act did not overtake his bad intent. He wanted to commit fornication with me, but he did not. Because of that, his fault must be buried as being only an intention that perished by the way and did not become reality. Thoughts are not subjects of yours; intentions are merely thoughts. They are not real, existing deeds."

"She is right, my lord," Mariana said.

"Your suit's unprofitable," Duke Vincentio said. "Angelo shall die. Stand up, I say."

He added, "I have thought of another fault. Provost, how did it come to be that Claudio was beheaded at such an unusual hour?"

"It was so commanded," the Provost replied.

"Did you receive a special legal warrant for the deed?"

"No, my good lord; I received a private message," the Provost replied.

"For which I do discharge you of your office," Duke Vincentio said. "Give up your keys."

"Pardon me, noble lord," the Provost said. "I thought it was a fault, but I did not know for sure. I repented the death of Claudio, after more thought. Evidence for what I say can be found in the prison, where a prisoner, whom I was ordered to execute by a private message, is still alive."

"Who is he?" Duke Vincentio asked.

"His name is Barnardine."

"I wish that you had done the same for Claudio what you did for Barnardine. Go and fetch him and bring him here; let me see him."

The Provost exited.

Escalus said, "I am sorry that one as learned and as wise as you have always appeared to be, Lord Angelo, should slip so grossly, both in the heat of passion and in a lack of tempered judgment afterward."

"I am sorry that I have caused such sorrow," Angelo replied, "So deeply does my sorrow stick in my penitent heart that I crave death more than I crave mercy. I deserve death, and I beg for death."

The Provost returned, bringing with him Barnardine, Claudio, and Juliet. Claudio's face was muffled and hidden by his clothing.

"Which one is Barnardine?" Duke Vincentio asked.

The Provost replied, "This is he, my lord," while indicating Barnardine.

“A friar told me about this man,” Duke Vincentio said.

Addressing Barnardine, he added, “You are said to have a stubborn soul that sees no further than this world, and you act accordingly. You have been condemned to die; however, I pardon all your Earthly crimes, and I pray that you will respond to this mercy by taking action to gain better times to come, both in this life and in the next.

“Friar Peter, give him spiritual counsel. I leave him in your hands.”

Duke Vincentio then asked, “Who is that muffled fellow?”

“This is another prisoner whom I saved,” the Provost replied. “He should have died when Claudio lost his head; he greatly resembles Claudio.”

The Provost unmuffled Claudio, revealing his face.

Isabella and Mariana stood up, Isabella ran over to Claudio, and they rejoiced.

Duke Vincentio, who knew that this was really Claudio, said, “If he resembles your brother, I pardon him for your brother’s sake, and, as for your own lovely sake, give me your hand and say that you will marry me and be mine. He is my brother, too — but there will be a fitter time for us to talk about this marriage proposal.

“Because of this strange appearance of the living Claudio, Lord Angelo perceives he’s safe; he knows that he will not be beheaded. I think I see a quickening in his eye.

“Well, Angelo, your evil requites you well: You have a wife. Look that you love your wife; her worth is fully worth yours.

“I find in myself an inclination to pardon people, and yet here’s one person whom I cannot pardon.”

He said to Lucio, “You have said that you knew me to be a fool, a coward, a lecher, an ass, a madman. What have I done to you that makes you call me such names?”

“Truly, my lord,” Lucio said. “It was all a joke. That’s just how I talk. I said those things on the spur of the moment, without thinking. I know that you can have me hanged for saying such things, but I prefer a lesser punishment, if it pleases you: Have me whipped, not hanged.”

“You shall be whipped first, sir, and hanged afterward,” Duke Vincentio said.

He added, “Provost, proclaim around about the city that if any woman has been wronged by this lewd fellow — I myself have heard him swear that he got a woman pregnant — let her appear, and he shall marry her. Once the two have been married, then he shall be whipped and hanged.”

“I beg your Highness,” Lucio said, “do not marry me to a whore. Your Highness said even now that I made you a Duke. My good lord, do not repay me by making me a cuckold.”

“Upon my honor, you shall marry her,” Duke Vincentio replied. “However, I pardon your slanders, and therefore you shall not be whipped and hanged — but you shall be married. Take him to prison, and make sure that he is married.”

“Marrying a punk — a prostitute — my lord, is very much like being pressed to death, whipping, and hanging,” Lucio said.

When a man is pressed to death, he lies on his back on a sharp rock, and heavy weights are placed on a board on his chest. More and more weights are added until the man dies.

“Anyone who slanders a Prince deserves such punishment,” Duke Vincentio said.

Some officers took Lucio away to prison.

Duke Vincentio spoke to many people in turn:

“Claudio, make sure that you marry and restore the honor of Juliet, whom you wronged.

“May you have joy, Mariana!

“Love Mariana, Angelo. I have been her confessor, and I know that she is virtuous.

“Thank you, good friend Escalus, for your great goodness. There’s more to come. You shall be rewarded with more than mere words.

“Thank you, Provost, for your care and secrecy: You have played your role well. We shall employ you in a worthier place: You shall be promoted.

“Forgive the Provost, Angelo, who brought you the head of Ragozine instead of Claudio’s, but this is an offence that pardons itself.

“Dear Isabella, I have a proposal that much concerns your future happiness. If you say yes to my proposal of marriage, what’s mine is yours and what’s yours is mine.”

Using the royal plural, Duke Vincentio then said to everyone, “So, let us all go to our palace; there we’ll tell you some things to come that it is fitting that you know.”

## ***CHAPTER VI: The Merchant of Venice***

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

#### **Male Characters**

DUKE OF VENICE.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO & PRINCE OF ARRAGON, Suitors to Portia.

ANTONIO, a Merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his Friend.

GRATIANO, SOLANIO, & SALARINO: Friends to Antonio and Bassanio.

LORENZO, in love with Jessica, Shylock's daughter.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, Shylock's friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Servant first to Shylock and then to Bassanio.

OLD GOBBO, Father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, Servant to Bassanio.

SALERIO, a Messenger from Venice and Gratiano's friend.

BALTHAZAR & STEPHANO: Servants to Portia.

#### **Female Characters**

PORTIA, a rich Heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-woman. Nerissa is a gentlewoman; her social status is high enough that she can marry a gentleman.

JESSICA, Daughter to Shylock.

#### **Minor Characters**

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailer, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

#### **Scene**

Partly at Venice, Italy, the home of Antonio and Bassanio, and partly at Belmont, Italy, the home of Portia.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

On a street in Venice, Antonio and his friends Salarino and Solanio were talking.

Antonio said, “Truly, I do not know why I am melancholy. It wearies me; you say it wearies you. But how I caught it, found it, or came by it, what stuff it is made of, whereof it is born, I do not know. Melancholy makes me such an idiot — such a want-wit — that I have much trouble to know myself.”

Salarino knew that Antonio had many merchant ships currently on the sea, and so he thought that Antonio must be worried about them.

Salarino said, “Your mind is tossing on the ocean. That is where your argosies — your large merchant ships — with their stately sails, as if they were signiors and rich burghers — gentlemen and prosperous freemen — are. They are like great floats in parades — the pageants of the sea. Your ships are so large that they look down on the petty traffickers, small ships that curtsy to them by lowering their flags to show them respect as they fly by with their woven wings.”

Solanio said, “Believe me, sir, had I such risky ventures going forth on the seas, the better part of my concerns would be about my hopes abroad. I would always be plucking a blade of grass and dropping it to find out in what direction the wind is blowing. I would always be peering at maps looking for ports and piers and anchorages. Everything that might make me fear that my risky ventures would not be successful would, no doubt, make me melancholy.”

Solanio said, “I would always be imagining harm coming to my ships at sea. Whenever I blew my breath over my soup to cool it, I would go into a fit of trembling because I would think what harm a too-great wind at sea could do to my ships. Whenever I would see the sand in an hourglass fall from the top to the bottom, I would think of shallows and of sandbars and I would see my wealth-bearing ship *Andrew* docked in sand and not in a safe port. I would see the high top of the main mast of my *Andrew* fall lower than her ribs — her wooden sides — and kiss her burial-ground. Whenever I went to church and saw the holy edifice of stone, I would immediately think of dangerous rocks, which by touching my noble vessel’s side, would scatter all her cargo of valuable spices on the ocean stream and clothe the roaring waters with my cargo of silk cloth. In short, I would always be thinking that at one moment I would own a valuable cargo, but in the next moment, due to misfortunes at sea, I would own nothing. Would I be able to think about these things and not become melancholy? No, of course not. No one needs to tell me why Antonio is melancholy. He is worried about his ships and their cargos of merchandise.”

“Believe me, I am not worried about my business ventures at sea,” Antonio said. “I thank my fortune — both my wealth and my luck — that I am not worried about such misfortunes as you think I am. I am a good businessman; I am diversified. I am not risking everything in a single ship. I am not risking everything in trading with a single country. Unless exceedingly great misfortunes happen, I will not go bankrupt anytime soon and certainly not this year. Therefore, my business ventures at sea are not making me melancholy.”

“Why, then you are in love,” Salarino said.

“Hardly,” Antonio replied.

“So you are not in love, either?” Salarino said. “In that case, we may as well say that you are sad because you are not merry. Saying that is as easy as saying that you laugh and leap and are merry because you are not sad. Now, by the god Janus, who has one head but two faces that look in different directions, Nature has created some strange fellows in her time. Some fellows are always happy: They have to peep through their eye-slits because their eyes are always half-closed due to constant laughter; they laugh like happy parrots at a melancholy bagpiper and at others who look as if they have been drinking vinegar and would never laugh and show their teeth during a laugh even if Nestor, the wise and old and serious advisor of the Greek army at Troy, thought that a jest was worth laughing at.”

Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano now came walking toward them. All three were Antonio’s friends, but Bassanio was Antonio’s best friend.

“Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,” Solanio said. “Here also come Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare you well. We leave you now with better company.”

“I would have stayed until I had made you merry,” Salarino said, “but now worthier friends than I can do that.”

“I regard your friendship as very dear and I know that your businesses are important,” Antonio said. “I understand why you need to leave. Your own businesses call on you, and now you embrace this occasion — the arrival of other friends — to depart.”

“Good morning, my good lords,” Salarino said.

“Good signiors both, when shall we meet together and have fun? Say, when?” Bassanio said. “You grow exceedingly strange and distant. Must you be so?”

“We will arrange our leisures to attend on yours,” Salarino said. “We will find time to get together with you.”

Salarino and Solanio departed.

Lorenzo said, “My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio, we two will leave you, but please remember that we will meet at dinnertime.”

“I will remember,” Bassanio said.

“You do not look well, Signior Antonio,” Gratiano said. “You think too seriously about worldly affairs. If you worry too much, you will lose the ability to enjoy yourself. Believe me, you are marvelously changed.”

“I regard the world as only the world, Gratiano,” Antonio replied. “It is a stage on which every man must play a part, and my part is a melancholy one.”

“Let me play the fool,” Gratiano said. “With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles — laugh lines — come. I prefer for my body to be heated with wine rather than cooled with mortifying groans. Why should a man, whose blood is warm inside his veins, sit like his dead grandsire’s alabaster statue? Why should a man seem to be asleep when he is awake? Why should a man cause himself to become ill by being peevish? Let me tell you, Antonio, I respect you, and it is out of my friendship that I say this: There is a sort of men whose pale faces are like a pond

covered with algae. Such men cultivate an obstinate silence because they want to win a reputation for being possessed of wisdom, gravity, and profound thought. It is as if they want to be able to say, 'I am Sir Oracle, and when I open my lips let no dog bark!' They are aware that oracles are supposed to speak for a god and that dogs are thought to bark at people who are in disgrace. Antonio, I know men who are thought to be wise only because they say nothing, but I am very sure that if these men would ever speak, other people would dam their ears by putting their fingers in them to stop them from hearing nonsense. They would also damn their ears because when they heard such nonsense they would call these brothers fools and so run afoul of Matthew 5:22: '*But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [an insulting term], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*' I will tell you more about this another time. So do not fish for a reputation for wisdom by using your melancholy as bait. Reputation can be worthless and not based on reality."

Gratiano then said, "Come, good Lorenzo. It is time for us to go."

He said to Antonio, "Farewell for a while. I'll end my exhortation after dinner. I am like a preacher who goes on far too long to finish his sermon before dinner and so must resume his sermon after dinner."

Lorenzo said to Antonio, "We will leave you then until dinner-time. Apparently, I must be one of these same dumb and never-speaking wise men because Gratiano speaks so much that he never lets me speak."

"Keep me company for two more years," Gratiano joked, "and you shall forget the sound of your own tongue."

"Farewell," Antonio said. "I will take your advice and become more talkative."

"Thank you," Gratiano said. "Truly, silence is only commendable in a dried beef tongue — or should I say an impotent old man — or in an adult virgin who is not marriageable — or should I say an old maid."

Gratiano and Lorenzo departed.

Antonio asked, "What was that all about?"

"Gratiano speaks an infinite deal about nothing, more than any man in all Venice," Bassanio said. "His ideas are like two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff: You shall seek all day before you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search."

"Well, tell me now which lady is it for whom you swore to make a secret pilgrimage," Antonio said. "You promised to tell me that today."

"It is not unknown to you, Antonio, how much I have squandered my estate by enjoying more prodigal and lavish living than my small means would allow me to continue. Nor do I now make moan and complain about being forced to stop such lavish living; instead, my chief concern is to extricate myself — honorably — from the great debts I have incurred by living so lavishly. To you, Antonio, I owe the most, both in money and in friendship. Because of your friendship to me, I feel able to tell you my plan for getting clear of the debts I owe."

“Please, good Bassanio, let me know your plan. If your plan is, as you yourself always are, honorable, be assured that my wallet, my person, and my resources will help you in your plan.”

“During my schooldays,” Bassanio said, “when I had shot and lost one arrow, I would shoot a similar arrow — one of the same weight and with the same pattern of feathers — in the same direction and with the same force that I had shot the first arrow. By risking the second arrow, I often found both it and the first arrow because I watched the second arrow more carefully than I had watched the first arrow. I am telling you about this childhood experience because it is relevant to what I am going to propose to you — my proposal is guileless like the proposal of a child. The money that I owe you is spent (by an impetuous youth) and gone, but if you please to shoot another arrow the same way that you shot the first arrow I do not doubt that I will be more careful and closely watch the second arrow and so find both arrows, or if not, I will find the second arrow and bring back to you the second amount of money I borrowed and thank you and continue to owe you the first amount of money I borrowed.”

“You ought to know me well,” Antonio said. “Right now you are wasting time by not speaking plainly; instead, you are circling around what you want to ask me to do. You doubt that I will help you, and by so doubting my friendship and my willingness to help you, you do more wrong than if you had wasted everything I have. Therefore, tell me plainly what you want me to do and what you know I am able to do. If you do so, I will do what you want me to do. Therefore, speak to me plainly.”

“In the town of Belmont is a lady who has been made rich by inheritance. She is beautiful, and what is more beautiful than that beauty, she has wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes I have received encouraging but speechless messages: She likes me. Her name is Portia, and she is in no way of lesser value than the Portia who was Cato’s daughter and Brutus’ wife — the Portia who was renowned for her devotion to her husband. Nor is the wide world ignorant of the worth of Portia of Belmont; the four winds blow in from every coast renowned suitors who wish to marry her. She has sunny locks of hair that hang on her temples like a golden fleece — that fleece that Jason sailed to Colchis in quest of. Now many Jasons come in quest of Portia. Antonio, if I had the means to be one of the men who travel to and seek to marry Portia, I truly believe — and my mind prophesies — that I would without question be the one who wins her! Therefore, I ask you to lend me money that will enable me to travel to Belmont and woo Portia.”

“You know that all my fortune is invested in ships at sea,” Antonio said. “I have neither the money you need nor merchandise that I can sell to raise the money you need. Therefore, go forth; see what my credit is worth in Venice. I will use all of my credit to raise the money you need — I will stretch my credit as far as it will stretch to get you the money you need to sail to Belmont and court beautiful Portia. Go, immediately inquire, and so will I, where money can be borrowed, and I believe without question that I can raise the money either from business loans or from loans from friends.”

— 1.2 —

Portia and her waiting-gentlewoman, Nerissa, who was her companion and confidante, talked together in a room of Portia’s house in Belmont.

“Truly, Nerissa, my little body is weary of this great world.”

“You would be weary of this great world, sweet madam, if your miseries were as abundant as your good fortunes are. However, as far as I can see, people who stuff themselves with too much food are as sick as people who starve because they have no food. It is no mean — small — happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean — middle. Those in the middle achieve Aristotle’s golden mean and so do not eat too much or too little food and so avoid sickness. People who eat too much grow white hair and age quickly; people who eat the right amount of food live longer. People should try to achieve the golden mean and so be virtuous.”

“Those are good moral maxims, and you have well delivered them,” Portia said.

“They would be better moral maxims if people actually followed them.”

“If to do the right thing were as easy as to know what the right thing to do is, small chapels would be large churches and the cottages of poor men would be the palaces of Princes. It is a good preacher who follows the instructions he gives in his own sermons. I can easier teach twenty people what things were good to be done, than be one of the twenty who would follow my own teaching. The brain may devise rules for controlling one’s temper, but a hot temper leaps over a cold rule. Mad, passionate youth skips over the good counsel given by wisdom, that old cripple. A youth is like a hare that jumps over the nets that are supposed to ensnare it. But this kind of talk and this kind of reasoning is not going to help me choose a husband. But I should not use the word ‘choose.’ I may neither choose whom I wish to marry nor refuse whom I do not wish to marry. And so the psychological will of a living daughter is curbed by the legal will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose a man to be a husband nor refuse a man who wins me to be his wife?”

“Your father was always virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations. It is said that dying virtuous men have special insight and can foretell the future. Therefore, the lottery that your father devised on his deathbed is the right way to choose your future husband. Here before us lie three caskets or boxes. The first casket is made of gold, the second of silver, and the third of lead. Whichever suitor chooses the casket your father wants your future husband to choose will, no doubt, be exactly the man whom you ought to marry. But do you like any of these Princely suitors who have already come to court you?”

“Name them one by one, and as you name them, I will describe them. By listening to my description of each of them, you can determine which of them, if any, I like.”

“First, there is the Neapolitan Prince — this Prince comes from Naples.”

“Yes, and he is a colt indeed — he is an uncouth young man. He does nothing but talk about his horse, and he thinks that it is a great accomplishment and a credit to himself that he can shoe his own horse. I am very much afraid that his mother committed adultery with a blacksmith.”

“Then there is the Count Palatine. This nobleman has supreme jurisdiction over his own county.”

“He does nothing but frown, as if he were saying, ‘If you will not have me, so be it — do as you please.’ He hears merry tales and yet he does not smile, I fear he will prove to be a weeping philosopher when he grows old because he is so full of impolite and inappropriate seriousness in his youth. In his old age, he will be like Heraclitus, the philosopher who wept when he saw human stupidity. In his old age, he will not be like Democritus, the laughing

philosopher who valued cheerfulness. I had rather be married to a death's-head — a skull — with a bone in his mouth than to either of these men. May God keep me away from these two men!”

“What do you think about Monsieur Le Bon, the French lord?”

“God made him, and therefore let us assume that he is a man,” Portia replied. “Truly, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but this man — why, he has a horse better than the Neapolitan's and a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine! He imitates every man and therefore he is no man — he does not have an identity of his own. If a thrush begins to sing, he immediately begins to dance. He fences with his own shadow. If I were to marry him, it would be like marrying twenty husbands because he has no identity of his own. If he would despise me, I would forgive him because if he were to love me to madness, I would never be able to return his love.”

“What do you say about Falconbridge, the young Baron from England?”

“You know I say nothing to him because he cannot understand me and I cannot understand him. He does not know Latin, French, or Italian, and you could come into a law court and accurately swear that I have a poor pennyworth's worth of knowledge of English. He is the picture of a proper man, but, alas, who can have a conversation with a picture or with a mime? And how oddly he dresses! I think he bought his jacket in Italy, his stockings in France, and his hat in Germany. His manners seem to come from everywhere.”

“What do you think of the Scottish lord, his neighbor?”

“The Scottish lord must have a neighborly charity. The Englishman lent him a box on the ear, and the Scottish lord swore he would pay him again when he was able. I think that the Englishman must have also lent the Frenchman a box on the ear and that the Scottish lord and the Frenchman joined forces and swore to someday pay the Englishman back.”

“How do you like the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?”

“I like him very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk. When the German is at his best, he is little worse than a man, and when he is at his worst, he is little better than a beast. If the worst that could happen ever happened — I married him and he died — I'm pretty sure that I could manage to live my life without him.”

“If he were to make the trial of the three caskets, and if he were to choose the right casket, you ought to refuse to perform your father's will — you ought to refuse to marry the young German.”

“Therefore, for fear of the worst, please set a deep glass of white wine from the Rhineland on one of the wrong caskets because even if the Devil is within the casket he will choose the casket that has the alcoholic temptation on it — I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, before I'll be married to a sponge who sops up alcohol.”

“You need not fear, lady, marrying any of these lords. They have told me what they have decided: They will return to their homes and not bother you by courting you unless they can do so without having to choose one of the three caskets.”

“Whoever marries me must choose the right casket,” Portia said. “If I live to be as old as the Sibyl, whom the god Apollo granted as many years of life as she was able to hold grains of sand in her hands, I will die as chaste as the virgin goddess Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner ordered in my father’s will. I am glad that this parcel of wooers is so reasonable because there is not one among them whose absence I do not greatly desire, and I pray that God grants them a fair departure.”

“Do you remember a Venetian who is a scholar and a soldier and who came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat while your father was still alive?” Nerissa asked.

“Yes, yes, he was Bassanio,” Portia said. “I think that was his name.”

She thought, *Bassanio was definitely his name, but I don’t want Nerissa to know that I am interested in him.*

“Truly, madam, he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the man who best deserved a fair and beautiful lady to be his wife.”

Pleased, Portia said, “I remember him well, and I remember him as being worthy of your praise.”

An attendant entered the room.

Portia said to him, “How are you? What is the news you bring?”

The attendant replied, “The strangers who came here to court you, madam, have come here to say goodbye to you. In addition, a herald has come to announce that his master, the Prince of Morocco, will arrive here tonight to court you.”

Portia replied, “If I could bid this new suitor welcome with as good a heart as I can bid my other suitors farewell, I would be glad that he is coming. But if the Prince of Morocco has the character of a saint and the black complexion of a Devil, I had rather that he shrive me than wive me — I had rather that he hear me confess than see me in a wedding dress. I confess that the skin color of my future husband is important to me, as is his character.”

She added, “Come, Nerissa.”

Then she said to the attendant, “Walk in front of us.”

Finally, she joked, “While we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.”

### — 1.3 —

In a public place in Venice, Bassanio was meeting with Shylock to ask the Jew of Venice to lend him money with Antonio as the guarantor. In all, he wanted three thousand ducats, aka Venetian gold coins.

Shylock said, “Three thousand ducats. Well.”

“Yes, sir, for three months.”

“For three months. Well.”

“For which, as I told you, Antonio shall be the guarantor. Antonio shall legally bind himself to pay back that money I borrow from you if I cannot pay it back.”

“Antonio shall be the guarantor. Well.”

“Will you supply me with the money? Will you oblige me? Can you tell me now either yes or no?”

Shylock said, “Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio legally bound as guarantor.”

“Yes. What is your answer: yes or no?”

“Antonio is a good man.”

“Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?”

“Oh, no, no, no, no,” Shylock said. “You mistake my meaning. When I said that he is a good man, I meant that he should be adequate security for the loan. Yet his wealth is at risk. He has one merchant ship bound for Tripolis and another bound for the Indies. I understand, moreover, from talking to people at the Rialto, the mercantile exchange here in Venice, that he has a third merchant ship bound for Mexico and a fourth one bound for England, and he has other business ventures scattered — and perhaps squandered — abroad. We must realize that ships are only boards and that sailors are only men. There exist land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves — I mean that pirates exist — and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. This man, Antonio, is, notwithstanding, good security for this loan. Three thousand ducats: I think I may make this loan with him as guarantor.”

“You may be sure that you can.”

“I will be assured that I can, and to ensure that I am sure, I will carefully think about making this loan. May I speak with Antonio?”

“If it will please you to dine with us.”

“Dine with you? And to smell pork and to eat of the habitation that your prophet the Nazarite conjured the Devil into? In Mark 5:1-13 of your holy book, we read of the man who was possessed by demons. Jesus ordered the demons to leave the possessed man and to enter the bodies of some pigs that rushed down a steep bank and entered a lake and were drowned. Such food is not kosher, and I am an observant Jew. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so on, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, or pray with you. What news comes from the Rialto?”

Shylock looked up and added, “Who is that man who is coming here?”

Bassanio said, “He is Signior Antonio.”

Shylock thought, *Antonio looks like a fawning publican. When I say “fawning,” I am being sarcastic because he is proud and does not fawn, but despite his pride he will ask me to lend his friend money. But he is very much like a publican — a Roman tax collector. Like a publican, he will take from the Jews their profit and give it to his gentile masters. I hate Antonio because he is a Christian. But I hate him even more because in his humble foolishness he lends money without charging interest and so brings down the rate of interest we moneylenders can charge in Venice. If I get the advantage of him — if I were a wrestler, I would say, if I can catch him once upon the hip so that I can throw him to the ground — I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him and get a great revenge. Antonio hates our sacred*

*nation, he hates us Jews, and he rails — even in the place where merchants most often do congregate — against me and against my business deals and well-won profit, which he calls undeserved interest. Cursed be my tribe of Jews if I forgive him!*

“Shylock, are you listening?” Bassanio asked.

“I am reckoning up how much ready money I have, and I think that I cannot immediately raise the full amount of three thousand ducats. But that does not matter. Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe, will lend me the additional amount you need to borrow. But wait! For how many months do you need to borrow the money?”

Shylock said to Antonio, “I hope that you are well, good signior. We were just talking about you. Your name was the last name in our mouths.”

Antonio replied, “Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow with interest — paying it when I borrow or collecting it when I lend — yet, to help my friend get the money he urgently needs, I will break my custom.”

He said to Bassanio, “Does Shylock know how much money you need?”

Shylock replied for Bassanio, “Yes, yes, three thousand ducats.”

Antonio added, “And he needs it for three months.”

Shylock said, “I had forgotten. Three months.”

He said to Bassanio, “You did tell me that.”

He added, “Well, then, we need a legal contract. Let me see. Antonio, I think that you said that you neither charge or pay interest.”

“That is true.”

Shylock said, “Jacob used to be the shepherd to his uncle Laban’s sheep. This Jacob was descended from our holy Abraham. First came Abraham, then his son Isaac, and then his grandson Jacob in the line of Jewish patriarchs. Jacob’s wise mother, Rebecca, helped him deceive Isaac so that Jacob and not his elder brother, Esau, would become Isaac’s heir. This story is told in Genesis 27. Yes, Jacob was the third Jewish patriarch.”

“What about him?” Antonio asked. “Did he charge interest?”

“He did not charge interest,” Shylock said. “That is, he did not charge interest *directly*, as you would say. Listen as I tell you what he did. Laban and Jacob made an agreement that all the lambs that would be born with fleeces of two colors — for example, black and white — would be Jacob’s payment for services rendered as shepherd. In the autumn, the ewes, being in heat, turned to the rams to be bred. Jacob, the skillful shepherd, took some branches and peeled away some of the bark so that the branches were dark where the bark was and light where the bark had been peeled away. These he set before the ewes as they were being bred because he believed that the ewes that saw the branches of two colors would give birth to lambs of two colors. And so it happened: The ewes gave birth to many lambs of two colors in the spring, and those lambs became the property of Jacob. Jacob thrived, and he was blest. Such thriving is a blessing, as long as men do not steal in order to thrive.”

Antonio said, “Jacob had to work as a shepherd in order to thrive, and he had the help of God, Who made the lambs of two colors. This was not a thing that Jacob had the power to bring to pass — simply looking at partly peeled branches will not make a ewe give birth to lambs of two colors. All of that was governed and shaped by the hand of Heaven. Why did you tell us this story? Are you trying to justify charging interest on loans? That is a poor justification. Jacob worked hard for his profit, and one problem that people have with usury is that the usurer does no work. Also, sheep can breed, but metal coins cannot breed. Do you consider your gold and silver to be ewes and rams?”

“I don’t know if my gold and silver can legitimately be compared to ewes and rams, but I do know that I make my gold and silver breed as fast as ewes and rams. But listen to me, Signior Antonio.”

Antonio ignored Shylock and said, “Listen well, Bassanio. This is important. The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. An evil soul producing holy witness is like a villain who smiles from cheek to cheek. He is like an apple that appears to be good but is rotten at the heart. Falsehood can put on a good-seeming disguise.”

Wanting to change the subject of conversation back to the loan, Shylock thought out loud, “Three thousand ducats: It is a good round sum. Three months from twelve; then, let me see, what will be the interest rate?”

Antonio asked, “Well, Shylock, will you lend us the money?”

Shylock replied, “Signior Antonio, many a time and often in the Rialto you have berated me about my moneylending and about my charging of interest. Always I have borne it with a patient shrug because patient forbearance is the mark of all our tribe of Jews. You call me a heretic and an unbeliever and a cutthroat dog, and you spit upon my Jewish garments, and you do that because I am making use of what I myself own. In your own holy book — Matthew 20:15 — is written, ‘*Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*’ Well, it now appears you need my help. Ha! You come to me, and you say ‘Shylock, I want to borrow money.’ You say this — you, who spat upon my beard and kicked me as you would kick a strange dog to get it out of your house. You need to borrow money. What should I say to you? Should I not say, ‘Has a dog money? Is it possible a cur can lend three thousand ducats?’ Or should I bow low and with a slave’s voice anxiously and humbly whisper, ‘Fair sir, you spit on me last Wednesday. You kicked me on a different day. On another day you called me a dog. Because you have shown me these courtesies, should I answer, ‘Yes, I will lend you the money you need’?”

“I am likely to call you those names again, to spit on you again, and to kick you again,” Antonio said. “If you will lend me this money, do not lend it as if you were lending it to a friend — when did a friend ever charge a friend interest? Instead, lend me this money as if you were lending it to an enemy — someone who, if he cannot repay the loan, you can happily require him to pay the penalty for breaking the contract.”

Shylock replied, “Why, look how you storm! I want to be friends with you and have your respect. I want to forget the shames that you have caused me. I want to lend you the money you need and charge you not even a penny of interest. I want to do all these things, and you rail at me and will not listen to me. I am offering you a kindness.”

“To lend us the money and not charge us interest is kindness indeed,” Bassanio said.

“That is the kindness I am offering to you,” Shylock said. “Go with me to a notary, and sign our contract there. I will not charge you interest. But as a merry joke, let us make the penalty for nonpayment of the money lent be exactly one pound of Antonio’s fair flesh, to be cut off and taken from whatever part of Antonio’s body it pleases me to take it.”

“Indeed, I am satisfied and pleased with such a contract,” Antonio said. “I will sign it, and I will say that you, Shylock, are kind.”

More cautious and suspicious than Antonio, Bassanio said, “You shall not sign your name to such a contract for me. I would rather do without the money.”

“Why, fear not, man,” Antonio said. “I will not break the contract. Within the next two months — that’s a whole month before this contract requires repayment — I expect my ships to return with nine times the amount of money I will borrow from Shylock.”

Shylock said, “Oh, father Abraham, what kind of people are these Christians, whose own tough negotiations and business dealings teach them to suspect the thoughts of others!”

He said to Bassanio, “Please, tell me this. If Antonio should be unable to repay the loan, what should I gain by taking one pound of his flesh? A pound of flesh taken from a man is not as valuable or profitable as is the flesh of sheep, cattle, or goats. I say that in order to buy Antonio’s favorable opinion of me I extend to him this friendship. If he will take it, well and good; if not, I commend him to God. And, if we are to be friends, I ask you to think that I do not have evil motives.”

“Shylock,” Antonio said, “I will sign the contract.”

“Then go to the notary’s and have him write up the contract. I will go and gather the ducats immediately, stop at my house to check on it because I left it in the unreliable hands of an unreliable servant, and very quickly I will go and meet you at the notary’s.”

“Hurry, gentle Jew,” Antonio said.

Shylock departed, and Antonio said to Bassanio, “This Jew will convert and become a Christian; he grows kind and gentle — he even grows gentle.”

“The terms of the contract seem to be fair, but I do not trust Shylock,” Bassanio said. “I do not like the pairing of fair terms and a villainous mind.”

“Come on,” Antonio said. “In this contract there can be no dismay; my ships come home a month before the day I must repay the money.”

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

The Prince of Morocco entered a room of Portia's house in Belmont. The Prince was dark skinned and wore white clothing, as did the servants with him. Nerissa and a few servants were with Portia.

"Do not dislike me because of my dark complexion," the Prince of Morocco said. "My dark skin is the dark uniform of those who live beneath the shining Sun. I am a neighbor of and closely related to the Sun-god. Bring to me the fairest and lightest-skinned man born in the north, where the fire of the Sun scarcely thaws the icicles, and let both of us cut ourselves in a competition for your love. We two competitors will prove who has the redder blood: him or me. Red blood is a sign of courage. I tell you, lady, my red blood has made valiant men tremble in fear, and by my love for you I swear that the most admired virgins of my climate have loved my red blood. I would not change my complexion except to win your love, my gentle Queen."

"In deciding whom I shall love, I am not solely led by the over-particular criticism of a maiden's eyes," Portia said. "Besides, the lottery of my destiny prevents me from voluntarily choosing whom I shall marry; I shall marry whoever wins the lottery. But if my father had not restricted me and hedged me by his intelligence and his will, making me to yield myself and marry whoever chooses correctly among the three caskets that I have told you about, you, yourself, renowned Prince, would have as fair a chance of winning my voluntary love as any of the wooers whom I have seen so far."

"For that I thank you," the Prince of Morocco said. "Therefore, I ask you to lead me to the caskets so that I can try my luck. By this scimitar that slew the Shah of Persia and a Persian Prince who had defeated the Turkish Sultan Solyman the Magnificent in three battles, I would outstare the sternest eyes that look, outbrave the most daring heart on the Earth, pluck the young sucking cubs from the mother bear, yes, and mock the lion when he roars for prey, to win you, lady. But that is not how you must be won! If Hercules and his servant Lichas were to play at dice to determine which of the two is the better man, the best throw of the dice may — through sheer luck — come from the hand of the lesser man. In such a case, Hercules' servant would defeat Hercules. I, also, with blind fortune leading me, may miss that which a less worthy man may attain, and then I would die with grieving."

"If you are to win me as your wife, you must take your chance at choosing the correct casket. You can do one of two actions: You can decide not to choose any casket and depart unmarried, or, if you decide to choose a casket, you must swear that if you choose the wrong casket that you will never marry any lady. Therefore, carefully choose which action you will do."

"I will choose a casket, and if I choose the wrong casket, then I will never marry. Come, let me now make my choice among the three caskets."

"Not yet," Portia replied. "First, we must go to the temple where you can swear that if you choose the wrong casket then you will never marry. After we eat dinner, then you can choose one of the three caskets. That will be your hazardous choice."

“May I have good fortune when I choose a casket!” the Prince of Morocco said. “My choice will make me be blessed or cursed among men.”

— 2.2 —

On a street in Venice, Launcelot Gobbo was talking to himself in front of Shylock’s house. He was a rustic fellow from the country who had become a servant to Shylock, and he was a funny fellow who liked to play jokes and tease people and make them laugh or cry. Like his father, he sometimes misused words — often on purpose.

He said to himself, “Certainly my conscience will serve me to run away from this Jew who is my master. My conscience will tell me that running away is the right and ethical thing to do although ordinarily running away from one’s master is the wrong and unethical thing to do.

“Let me put it to the test by imagining a conversation with my conscience and the Devil.

“The fiend — the Devil — is at my elbow and tempts me by saying to me, ‘Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, good Gobbo, good Launcelot Gobbo’ — the Devil is a lawyer and wants to be sure to name me in such a way that I cannot pretend later that the Devil was talking to someone else.

“Anyway, the Devil says to me, ‘Use your legs, take the start, run away.’

“But my conscience says, ‘No; take heed,’ honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, ‘honest Launcelot Gobbo’ — my conscience is also lawyer-like. It wants to name me in so many different ways so that later I cannot claim that my conscience was not speaking to me.

“Anyway, my conscience says, ‘Do not run away, scorn running with your heels.’

“Well, the most courageous fiend — the Devil — advises me to pack in my job and run away. ‘*Fia!*’ says the fiend. The Devil knows Italian, although he mispronounces it — By ‘*fia,*’ the Devil means ‘*via*’ or ‘*away!*’ The fiend tells me, ‘In Heaven’s name’ — ha! The Devil said the word ‘Heaven’! The Devil tells me, ‘In Heaven’s name, have a brave mind and run away.’

“Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, ‘My honest friend Launcelot, because you are an honest man’s son’ — but my conscience is wrong. I am not an honest man’s son; rather, I am an honest woman’s son. Indeed, my father did smack something — he kissed noisily with his lips something that may have been that area between a woman’s legs. Then something else grew — something a little below his waist level. And then he had a kind of taste — his tongue and the thing that grew both tasted the same wetness. In short, my father cheated on his wife, and cheaters are not honest and so I am not an honest man’s son.

“That reminds me. The Italian word ‘*fia*’ can mean ‘happening’ or ‘maybe’ or, in northern Italy, ‘vagina.’

“Well, my conscience says, ‘Launcelot, budge not. Do not run away from your master.’

“The fiend, however, says, ‘Budge. Run away from your master.’

“‘Budge not,’ says my conscience.

“‘Conscience,’ I say, ‘you give good advice.’

“‘Fiend,’ I say, ‘you also give good advice.’

“To be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, if I may say so, is a kind of Devil.

“In order to run away from the Jew, I would have to take the advice of the fiend, who, if you will excuse me, is the Devil himself.

“Certainly the Jew is the very Devil incarnation — is that the right word? Should I say ‘incarnate’?

“To speak truly, my conscience is a kind of hard conscience because it tells me to stay with the Jew.

“The fiend gives me the more friendly counsel — the advice that I want to hear.

“I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run. My conscience did not help me after all. The Devil is much friendlier to me than my conscience.”

Launcelot was talking merely to amuse himself. He had already let Shylock know that he wanted to work for Bassanio, and Shylock had told him that he would talk to Bassanio and give him a good recommendation.

Before Launcelot Gobbo could run away, his father, Old Gobbo, who was nearly completely blind and was carrying a basket, arrived on the scene.

Old Gobbo asked Launcelot, “Master young man, please tell me which is the way to the house of master Shylock the Jew?”

Launcelot thought, *Heavens, this is my true-begotten father! To be stone-blind is to be completely blind. My father’s eyesight is not as bad as that, but he is more blind than sand-blind, which is to be a little blind. It is better to call him gravel-blind and best to call him very gravel-blind because he is almost stone-blind. My father does not recognize me because his eyesight is so bad. I will try confusions with him — that should be funnier than to try conclusions with him. To try conclusions with someone means to argue with someone.*

Old Gobbo repeated, “Master young gentleman, please tell me which is the way to master Jew’s house.”

Launcelot and his father were standing in front of Shylock’s house, but Launcelot turned his father in all directions as he said, “Turn to your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning, turn to your left. At the turning after that, do not turn at all, but instead move at an angle to the Jew’s house.”

When Launcelot had finished turning his father in all directions, his father was facing the door of Shylock’s house.

“By God’s saints, it will be difficult for me to find the Jew’s house,” Old Gobbo said. “Can you tell me whether a certain man named Launcelot, who works for him, dwells with him or not?”

“Are you speaking of young Master Launcelot?” Launcelot asked.

He thought, *This is an opportunity for me to raise the waters and bring tears to my father's eyes.*

“Launcelot is no master, sir. A master is a man of a higher status than Launcelot has ever achieved; he is only a poor man's son. His father, even if it is I who say it, is an honest and exceedingly poor man and, God be thanked, well to live. He is so poor that he does well even to live, being unable to live well.”

“Well, let his father be what his father will,” Launcelot said. “Instead, let us talk about young Master Launcelot.”

“Let us talk about Launcelot. We have no reason to bring ‘master’ into our conversation.”

“Please, old man, ergo, old man, ergo, I ask you, are you talking about young Master Launcelot?”

He thought, *One of these days I need to find out what “ergo” means. I have heard many learned men use it — and use it and use it.*

Old Gobbo said, “I am talking about Launcelot, not Master Launcelot, if it pleases your mastership.”

“Ergo, Master Launcelot is the subject of our conversation. Don't talk about Master Launcelot, father — you don't mind if I call you ‘father,’ do you? An old man such as yourself must be a father. As I was saying, don't talk about Master Launcelot because the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings and prophecies, and according to the Sisters Three who are the Three Fates who control the destinies of men, and according to such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, he has gone to Heaven.”

“God forbid!” Old Gobbo said. “The boy was the very staff of my old age, my very prop, the person who supported me.”

Launcelot, who was fat, not thin, said, “Do I look like a long, thin cudgel or a long, thin hovel-post or a long, thin staff or a long, thin prop? Do you know me, father? And by ‘father,’ I mean ‘father’ as in ‘biological father.’”

“I do not know you, young gentleman, but, please tell me for real about my boy, God rest his soul. Is he alive or dead?”

“Seriously, don't you know me, father?”

“Alas, sir, I am sand-blind; I do not know you.”

“Indeed, even if you had good eyes, you might fail to recognize me: It is a wise father who knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news about your son.”

Launcelot knelt and added, “Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may be unrecognized for a while, but sooner or later the truth will come out. So, father, give me your blessing. You can safely bless me. I am no Jacob.”

Genesis 27 tells how Jacob deceived Isaac, the father of Esau and him, into giving him a blessing intended for Esau.

“Please, sir, stand up,” Old Gobbo said. “I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.”

“Please, father,” Launcelot said, “let’s have no more fooling about it — quickly give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy who was, your son who is, your child who shall be.”

“I cannot believe you are my son.”

“I don’t know what I shall think about that, but I am Launcelot, Shylock the Jew’s servant, and I am sure Margery, your wife, is my mother.”

“My wife’s name is Margery, indeed,” Old Gobbo said. “I’ll be sworn, if you really are Launcelot, you are my own flesh and blood. The Lord be praised if you are!”

Old Gobbo reached out his hand and felt the long hair on the back of Launcelot’s head and said, “What a beard you have got! You have more hair on your chin than Dobbin my carthorse has on his tail.”

“It should seem, then, that Dobbin’s tail grows backward,” Launcelot said. “It grows shorter, not longer. I am sure Dobbin had more hair on his tail than I have on my face when I last saw him.”

“Lord, how you have changed! But you are my son. How do you and your master get along? I have brought him a present. Do you and your master get along well?”

“We get along well — yes, well. But, so far as I am concerned, as I have set up my rest to run away — that is, I have made up my mind to run away — so I will not rest until I have run some distance and put some ground between my master and me. My master is a stereotypical Jew. You want to give him a present! Instead, give him a halter with which he can hang himself. I am famished in his service; he starves me,” Launcelot said, bouncing on his toes and jiggling his fat belly.

He added, “Most people use their fingers to help them count. I use my ribs to count my fingers! Father, I am glad you have come. Give your present to a certain Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives very nice new uniforms to his servants. If I do not become one of his servants, I will run away as far as God has any ground.”

He looked around and said, “Here is some good luck! Here comes Master Bassanio walking toward us. Speak to him, father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.”

Bassanio, his servant Leonardo, and some other servants walked close to Launcelot Gobbo and Old Gobbo.

Bassanio said to a servant, “You may do so, but let it be done so hastily that supper will be ready no later than five o’clock. See to it that these letters are delivered, get the uniforms made, and tell Gratiano to come at once to my lodging.”

Launcelot said, “Talk to him, father.”

“God bless your worship!” Old Gobbo said.

“God bless you!” Bassanio replied. “How may I help you?”

“This is my son, sir, a poor boy — ”

Launcelot interrupted, "I am not a poor boy, sir. Instead, I am the rich Jew's man, or servant. I would, sir, as my father will tell you — "

Old Gobbo said, "He has a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve — "

Bassanio thought, *A great infection? He means "ambition."*

Launcelot interrupted, "Indeed, the short and the long of it is, I serve the Jew, and I have a desire, as my father will tell you — "

Old Gobbo said, "His master and he, if you don't mind my saying so, are scarcely cater-cousins — they are hardly close friends who eat together — "

Launcelot interrupted, "To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, does cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall fructify unto you — "

Bassanio thought, *Fructify? He means "notify," I think. To fructify is to bear fruit.*

Old Gobbo said, "I have here a dish of doves prepared for eating that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit or request is — "

Launcelot interrupted, "To be very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, I must say it, this old man, this poor man, is my father."

Bassanio thought, *Impertinent? I can guess that he means "pertinent."*

Bassanio said, "Just one of you do all the speaking for both of you. What do you want?"

Launcelot said, "I want to work for you, sir."

Old Gobbo said, "That is the very defect of the matter, sir."

Bassanio thought, *Defect? I can guess that he means "effect" or "purport."*

"I know who you are now," Bassanio said. "Yes, you can work for me. Shylock, your master, spoke with me today, and he gave you a good recommendation. But I wonder whether you are doing the right thing: Is it wise to stop working for a rich Jew and start working for so impoverished a gentleman as me?"

Launcelot replied, "Let us remember this old proverb: He who has the grace of God has enough. We can split the proverb in two and apply it to the Jew and you. As a Christian, you have the grace of God; as a rich Jew, Shylock has enough when it comes to money."

"You speak well," Bassanio said to Launcelot. "You have a mastery of words and can use — or willfully misuse — them well."

He said to Old Gobbo, "Go, father, with your son."

He said to Launcelot, "Say goodbye to your old master and then go to my lodging."

He said to one of his other servants, "Give Launcelot a uniform different from that of the other servants. Give him the uniform of a jester. He shall be my fool."

Launcelot smiled. This was a promotion. He would no longer be an ordinary servant but would instead use his brain and wit to entertain Bassanio and make him laugh.

Launcelot said to his father, "Father, we will go inside the Jew's house."

He then started in on his new job: "I am a failure. I cannot get a job as an ordinary servant because I cannot speak correctly. Well, let me read my palm. I hold it flat like a table, and I do not think that any other man in Italy has a better table to place a Bible on — or to place on a Bible — and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If any man does have a better table, well, I shall have good luck anyway. Ah, yes, the table line in palmistry is the line of fortune. Let me look at the lines on my palm. Ah, here is an unremarkable lifeline, but I see leading to it long, deep lines from the thumb's ball, aka the Mount of Venus. Those lines indicate how many wives I will have. Nothing remarkable, I see. Here is a small trifling number of wives — alas, fifteen wives is nothing! Eleven widows and nine maidens is a simple coming-in for one man. If I collect dowries, I will have money coming-in, and I will also have wives for cumming-in. I see that I will escape being drowned twice and so escape the peril of water, but I will be in peril of losing my life while I am on the edge of a featherbed. I see sexcapades and marital escapades in my life, but these are unremarkable sex adventures. Well, if Fortune is a woman, she's a good wench for having given me this palm. Father, let us go. I will take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye."

Launcelot Gobbo and his father went into Shylock's house.

Bassanio returned to business, saying, "Good Leonardo, look at this list. Buy these things and stow them neatly on board ship, but return quickly, for I am hosting a feast tonight for my best friends. Go now, and hurry."

"I will do my best," Leonardo said and then departed.

Gratiano now came walking toward Leonardo and asked, "Where is your master, Bassanio?"

"There he is, sir," Leonardo said, pointing.

Gratiano called, "Signior Bassanio!"

Bassanio replied, "Hello, Gratiano."

Gratiano walked over to Bassanio and said, "I have a favor to ask of you."

"Whatever it is, I will grant it."

"You must not say no to me; I must go with you to Belmont."

"Why, then you must," Bassanio said. "But listen to me, Gratiano, you are too wild and too rude and too bold of voice. These are qualities that become you happily enough, and in such eyes as mine and those of your other friends, these qualities do not appear to be faults. But in places where you are not known, why, there they seem to be too free and open and unrestrained and liberal. Please, be careful to use some cold drops of modesty to lessen your thoughtless and boisterous and skipping spirit, lest through your wild behavior people will think badly of me in the place I go to, thus making me lose all my hopes of marrying a deceased rich man's daughter."

"Signior Bassanio, listen to me," Gratiano said. "If I do not put on a sober covering, both of clothing and behavior, talk with respect and swear only now and then, carry prayer-books in my pockets, appear to be demure and modest, and while prayers are being said at the dinner table, if I do not take off my hat and use it to cover my eyes, and if I do not sigh and say,

‘Amen,’ and if I do not always observe good etiquette, like a person who customarily assumes a serious expression in order to please his grandmother, then never trust me more.”

“Well, we shall see how you act when the time for good behavior comes.”

“No problem, but tonight does not count. Do not judge me by how I act tonight in your presence.”

“OK,” Bassanio said. “It would be a pity if you were sober and serious tonight. Instead, I urge you to put on your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends who wish to be merry with us. But goodbye for now — I have some business to take care of.”

“And I must go to Lorenzo and the others,” Gratiano said, “but we will visit you at suppertime.”

— 2.3 —

Launcelot Gobbo, who was now working as the fool of Bassanio, was talking in front of Shylock’s house with Jessica, who was the daughter of Shylock.

Jessica said, “I am sorry that you are no longer going to work for my father and will instead work for a new master: Bassanio. Our house is Hell, and you, who are a merry Devil, did rob it of some of its tedium and boredom. But farewell, and here is a ducat for you. One more thing. Launcelot, soon at supper you shall see Lorenzo, who is your new master’s guest. Give him this letter; do it secretly, and so farewell. I do not want my father to see me talking with you. He might suspect something.”

“Adieu!” Launcelot said. “Tears exhibit my tongue. My tongue need not express my sorrow because my tears are already doing that. You are a very beautiful pagan and a very sweet Jew! If a Christian does not play the knave and steal you away from your father to be his wife, I am much deceived. But, adieu. These foolish drops on my cheeks do somewhat drown my manly spirit. Adieu.”

“Farewell, good Launcelot.”

Carrying the letter that Jessica had given to him, Launcelot departed to go to Bassanio, his new employer.

Jessica said, “I am committing a heinous sin by being ashamed of Shylock, my father! I am ashamed to be my father’s child! But although I am his daughter and therefore I share his blood, I do not share his manners. I inherited his blood, but not his behavior. Oh, Lorenzo, if you keep the promise you made to me, I shall end this strife by becoming a Christian and your loving wife. If I become your wife, two will become one, and I will share your blood and not my father’s.”

She went inside her father’s house.

— 2.4 —

Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Solanio now walked near Shylock’s house and then stopped to talk.

Lorenzo was making plans for them that night to attend Bassanio’s masquerade ball: “At suppertime, we will sneak away, go to my lodging, disguise ourselves with masks, and return

and make a grand entrance with torchbearers and musicians, all within one hour.”

Gratiano objected, “We have not made good preparation.”

Salarino brought up an example: “We have not yet hired torchbearers to accompany us as we go to the masquerade ball.”

Solanio said, “It would be bad to do as you suggest unless we can do it properly and with style; if we cannot, then it is better not to do it.”

Lorenzo pointed out, “It is now only four o’clock: we have two hours to get everything ready.”

Launcelot now arrived, carrying the letter that Jessica had given to him to give to Lorenzo.

Lorenzo asked, “Launcelot, what news do you have for us?”

“If it will please you to break the seal on this letter, you may read for yourself what’s the news.”

Launcelot gave Lorenzo the letter, and Lorenzo looked at it and said, “I know the handwriting. Truly, the hand that wrote it is a pretty hand and whiter than the paper it wrote on.”

“It must be a love letter,” Gratiano said.

Launcelot said, “Please excuse me, sir. I must leave.”

“Where are you going?” Lorenzo asked.

“I am ordered to invite my old master the Jew to eat tonight with my new master the Christian.”

“Wait a moment,” Lorenzo said. “Here is a tip for you. Tell gentle Jessica that I will not fail to see her. Tell my message to her privately.”

Launcelot departed.

Lorenzo said, “Gentlemen, will you prepare yourselves to wear masks for this masquerade ball tonight? I will have a torchbearer.”

He had read the letter and knew that Jessica, disguised as a young male, would be their torchbearer.

Salarino said, “Yes, indeed, I will start my preparations now.”

Solanio said, “And so will I.”

Lorenzo said, “Meet Gratiano and me at Gratiano’s lodging one hour from now.”

Salarino said. “Good. We will do so.”

Salarino and Solanio departed.

Gratiano asked, “Wasn’t that letter from beautiful Jessica?”

“I will tell you everything,” Lorenzo said. “She has given me instructions for how I can take her from her father’s house. In the letter she has also told me how much gold and how many

jewels she has. She also wrote that she intends to disguise herself by wearing the clothing of a page: a young male servant.

“If ever the Jew her father goes to Heaven, it will be for his gentle daughter’s sake. Misfortune would never dare to cross her path unless it should do so because she is the daughter of a Jew: one who does not have Christian faith.”

“Come, go with me; read Jessica’s letter as we walk. Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer tonight.”

They departed.

— 2.5 —

Launcelot and Shylock were talking in front of Shylock’s house.

“Well, you shall see — your own eyes will show you — the difference between old Shylock and Bassanio,” Shylock said to Launcelot.

Shylock called for his daughter, who was inside his house: “Jessica!”

He said to Launcelot, “With Bassanio, you shall not be able to gourmandize and eat like a glutton the way that you have been doing here.”

He shouted, “Jessica!”

He said to Launcelot, “With Bassanio, you shall not be able to sleep and snore and wear out your clothing.”

He shouted, “Jessica!”

Launcelot now shouted, “Jessica!”

Shylock asked, “Who asked you to call for her? I did not ask you to call for her.”

“Your worship was accustomed to tell me that I could do nothing without first being ordered to do it.”

Jessica came out of the house and asked her father, “Were you calling for me? What can I do for you?”

“I have been invited to supper, Jessica,” Shylock said. “Here are my keys. But why should I eat supper with Bassanio and Antonio? They have not invited me out of friendship. This is a form of flattering me. But yet I’ll go in hate, and not in friendship, to feed upon the food of Bassanio, the prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl, look after my house. I am very loath to leave here and go to the supper. There is some ill brewing that will disturb my rest. I know that because I dreamed of moneybags last night — an ill omen!”

“Please, let us leave,” Launcelot said. “Bassanio, my young master, expects your reproach.”

“You probably meant to say that Bassanio expects my approach,” Shylock said, “But your words, even when wrongly chosen, are often apt. He expects my reproach, and I expect his. Each of us expects the displeasure of the other’s company.”

Launcelot said, "I believe that they have conspired together. I will not say that you shall see a masquerade, but if you do, then it was not for nothing that I have experienced bad omens."

He then began to parody such ill omens as dreaming of moneybags: "My nose bled on the most recent Black Monday at six o'clock in the morning, and just four years ago I got a nosebleed on Ash Wednesday in the afternoon. Black Monday is especially ominous. It is the day after Easter, and the Black Monday of 1360 was so cold that many men died as they rode on horseback. Dreams are especially prescient on feast days, and Black Monday is the day after a feast day and so it is maybe possibly sort of prescient."

"What, is there going to be a masquerade ball?" Shylock said. "I hate such frivolity. Listen to me, Jessica. Lock up the doors of the house, and when you hear the drum and the vile squealing of the fife by musicians who must twist their necks awry to play the instrument, do not climb up to the upper story's windows or thrust your head out of the window to gaze on Christian fools with masked faces. Instead, stop my house's ears — I mean close the shutters — to keep out the noises and noisome music. Do not allow the sound of shallow frivolity to enter my sober house. By Jacob's staff — the staff that was his main possession when he crossed the river Jordan and then made himself a wealthy man — I swear that I do not wish to leave my house and feast away from home tonight. However, I will go. Launcelot, you go now and tell your master that I will come to his feast."

"I will, sir," Launcelot said.

To Jessica, Launcelot said quietly, "Mistress, look out the window, despite what your father said. There will come a Christian who will be worth a look from you, a Jew."

Launcelot departed.

Shylock asked his daughter, "What did that fool, that offspring of Hagar, say to you? Abraham rejected Hagar and her offspring — her son, Ishmael — and sent them away, I am as contemptuous of Launcelot right now as Abraham was of Hagar and her son."

Jessica said, "He said, 'Farewell, mistress,' and nothing more."

Shylock said, "Launcelot is a patch — a fool. He is kind enough, but he is a huge eater, he is as slow as a snail when it comes to learning how to do his job, and he sleeps by day more than a nocturnal wildcat that stays awake all night. He is like a drone: a male bee that does no work. Well, I do not allow drones to hive — to live — with me, and therefore I part with him, and I part with him to one who will let him help to waste the money he has borrowed from me.

"Well, Jessica, go inside. Perhaps I will return very quickly. Do as I told you. Lock the doors after you are inside. Remember this proverb that thrifty minds ought always to remember: Fast bind, fast find. Keep your things locked up, and thieves will steal them not. Lock everything up tight, and everything will be all right. Keep safe what you've got, and you shall lack for naught."

Shylock departed.

Jessica said quietly, "Farewell. Unless my fortune is crossed with bad luck, I will lose a father and you will lose a daughter."

She went inside the house.

Gratiano and Salarino, both of them wearing masks, walked up to Shylock's house.

Gratiano said, "This is the slanting and overhanging roof under which Lorenzo wanted us to stand and wait for him."

Salarino said, "He ought to be here by now. He is late."

"It is a marvel that he is late. Lovers are usually early when they are meeting the one they love."

"The doves that draw the chariot of Venus, goddess of love, fly ten times faster when they carry new lovers than when they carry long-married faithful couples!"

"That has always been the case," Gratiano said. "Who stands up after feasting with the same appetite that he had when he sat down to feast? Where is the horse that runs back with the same energy that it had when it started its race? Everything is better when it is anticipated than when it is enjoyed. A ship hung with sails and banners sets forth from its home bay like a young prodigal son who sets out from home. Both are hugged and embraced by wantons — the ship's sails are hugged by wanton winds, and the young men are hugged by wanton women. But the ship returns like the prodigal son — its wooden ribs are now weather-beaten timbers and its proud sails are now ragged. The sails and the prodigal son are lean and torn, and they have been beggared by wantons."

"Here comes Lorenzo," Salarino said. "We will talk more about this later."

Lorenzo said, "Sweet friends, thank you for your patience as you waited for me. I know that I am late. Not I, but some business that came up, have made you wait. When you shall want to play the thieves to acquire wives, I'll wait as long for you then as you have waited for me now. Let us go to this door. This is where my soon-to-be father-in-law the Jew lives."

He said loudly, "Who is inside this house?"

Jessica, dressed in male clothing, appeared on a second-floor balcony.

She said, "Who are you? Tell me so that I can know for certain, although I would swear that I recognize your voice."

"I am Lorenzo, and I am the man you love."

"You are Lorenzo for certain, and you are indeed the man I love. Who do I love as much as I love you? No one. And who knows better than you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?"

"Heaven and your own thoughts are witnesses that you are mine," Lorenzo replied.

"Here, catch this box," Jessica said. "It is worth the trouble of catching it. I am glad it is night so that you cannot see me because I am very ashamed of the clothing I am wearing — I have exchanged my woman's clothing for a man's clothing. But love is blind and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that they themselves commit; if they could, Cupid himself would blush to see me thus transformed to a boy."

"Come down because you must be my torchbearer," Lorenzo said.

“What, must I hold a candle to illuminate my shame? My shame in itself, truly, is too apparent and too immodest. Lorenzo, my love, you know that torches shed a light on things, and I really ought to be hidden by darkness.”

“You are sweet and lovely even when you are disguised and clothed like a boy, but come at once because the secretive night is acting like a runaway as it quickly steals away. People are waiting for us at the feast of Bassanio.”

“I will lock the doors and gild myself with gold by taking some more gold ducats and be with you quickly,” Jessica said.

Gratiano said, “I give my word that she is a gentle and well-born gentile and not a Jew. Her behavior shows that.”

“I am lying if I do not say I love her heartily,” Lorenzo said. “She is wise, if I can judge her fairly, and she is beautiful, if my eyes tell me the truth, and she is faithful to me, as she has proven herself to be by her actions, and therefore, she, who is wise, beautiful, and faithful, shall have a place in my heart and in my soul. Our masked friends are at the masquerade ball waiting for us.”

Jessica came out of her father’s house.

Lorenzo said, “Good, you are here. Gentlemen, let us leave.”

Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salarino departed. Gratiano started to leave with them, but he saw Antonio coming and instead walked to meet him.

“Who’s there?” Antonio said.

“Antonio, it is I!”

“Gratiano! Where are all the others? It is nine o’clock: Our friends are all waiting for you. There will be no masque for you tonight. The wind has changed and is favorable for sailing. Bassanio will go on board very quickly. I have sent twenty men out to look for you.”

“I am glad that the wind has changed,” Gratiano said. “I desire no more delight than to set sail and be gone tonight.”

— 2.7 —

In a room in her home, Portia was standing with the Prince of Morocco and several servants, both hers and his.

Portia said to one of her servants, “Draw the curtains and show this noble Prince the three caskets.”

She then said to the Prince of Morocco, “Now make your choice.”

He said, “The first casket, which is made of gold, has this inscription: *‘Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire.’*

“The second casket, which is made of silver, is inscribed with this promise: *‘Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.’*

“The third casket, which is made of dull lead, is inscribed with this warning that is as unpolished and plain as the lead of the casket: ‘*Whoever chooses me must give and hazard all he has.*’

“How shall I know if I have chosen the right casket?”

Portia replied, “One of the caskets contains my picture, Prince. If you choose that casket, then I am yours and we shall be married.”

“May some god help me to choose the right casket!” the Prince of Morocco said. “Let me see; I will read the inscriptions again.

“What does this lead casket say? ‘*Whoever chooses me must give and hazard all he has.*’ Give all he has? For what? For lead? Hazard all he has? For lead? The inscription of this casket is threatening. Men who hazard all they have do so in hope of good returns. A golden mind does not lower itself for displays of worthless dross; therefore, I will neither give nor hazard anything for lead.

“What says the silver casket with her virgin hue? Silver is the color of the Moon, whose goddess is the virgin Diana. ‘*Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.*’ As much as he deserves! Pause there, Prince of Morocco, and weigh your value with an impartial hand. If you should be judged by your self-esteem, you certainly are deserving enough, and yet ‘enough’ may not extend so far as to this lady, Portia. And yet to be unsure of what I deserve is a weak belittling of myself. As much as I deserve! Why, I deserve the lady! I do deserve her because of my birth, because of my fortunes, because of my graces, and because of my qualities of breeding. But more than any of these, I do deserve her because of my love. What if I looked no further, but simply chose the silver casket?

“Let’s see once more this saying that is engraved on the gold casket: ‘*Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire.*’ Why, many men desire the lady; all the world desires her; from the four corners of the Earth, they come to kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint: The wild Hyrcanian deserts and the vast wildernesses of wide Arabia are like thoroughfares now for Princes to come to view fair Portia. The watery kingdom that is the ocean, whose ambitious head — the tall waves — spits in the face of Heaven, is no bar to stop the foreign spirited men of courage, for they come as if they were traveling over a mere brook to see fair Portia.

“One of these three caskets contains her Heavenly picture.

“Is it likely that the lead casket contains her picture? It would be a damnable offense to think so base a thought: it would be too gross to think that. Should her picture be wrapped in a lead casket as if for burial? Is she to be wrapped in lead for burial in a dark grave?

“Or shall I think she would be wrapped in silver for burial? But silver is worth only one-tenth as much as gold. It is sinful to think that her picture would be in a silver casket. Portia is a rich gem, and such a rich gem would be set only in gold. They have in England a coin that bears the figure of an angel stamped in gold, but that is only an engraving. But here the picture of an angel lies in a golden bed — the gold casket.

“Give me the key to the gold casket. That is the casket I choose. Let us see whether I will be successful.”

“Here is the key,” Portia said. “If my picture is inside the gold casket, then I am yours.”

The Prince of Morocco unlocked the gold casket and opened it.

“Oh, Hell!” he said. “What have we here? A carrion Death’s head, a skull, within whose empty eye socket there is a written scroll! I’ll read the writing out loud:

*“All that glitters is not gold;*

*“Often have you heard that told:*

*“Many a man his life has sold*

*“Only my outside to behold.*

*“Gilded tombs do worms enfold.*

*“Had you been as wise as bold,*

*“Young in limbs, in judgment old,*

*“Your answer had not been inscrolled.*

*“Instead, you would have seen a picture.*

*“Farewell; your hopes are dead and cold.*

“My hopes are dead and cold indeed, and my labor is lost. Farewell, heat, and welcome, frost! Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart to take a long and tedious leave; losers leave quickly.”

The Prince of Morocco departed with his servants.

Portia said, “Good riddance. Draw the curtains closed. I hope that everyone with his complexion and character will choose a casket with the same success that he did. He has too great an opinion of himself and suffers from excessive self-esteem.”

— 2.8 —

On a street in Venice, Salarino and Solanio were talking.

Salarino said, “Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail. Gratiano set sail with him, but I am sure that Lorenzo did not set sail with them.”

Solanio said, “The villain Jew with his outcries got the Duke out of bed. They went together to search Bassanio’s ship for Jessica and the money and jewels she took with her.”

“They came too late to search the ship,” Salarino said. “The ship had already set sail. But there the Duke was told that Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica were seen together in a gondola. In addition, Antonio swore to the Duke that Lorenzo and Jessica were not on board that ship.”

“I never heard passionate cries so confused, so strange, so outrageous, and so variable as those the dog Jew did shout in the streets: ‘My daughter! Oh, my ducats! Oh, my daughter! Fled with a Christian! Oh, my Christian ducats! Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter! A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats, of double ducats worth twice as much as ordinary ducats, stolen from me by my daughter! And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, stolen by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl. She has the stones with her, and she has the ducats.’”

“Why, all the boys in Venice followed him,” Salarino said. “They were shouting, ‘His stones, his daughter, and his ducats.’ They were laughing, knowing as they did that the word ‘stones’ can mean testicles as well as jewels.”

Solanio said, “Antonio must be very careful and be very sure to pay back his loan to Shylock on the day it is due, or Shylock will use the breach of contract to get revenge on Antonio for this. The Jew’s daughter ran away with Antonio’s friend.”

“That is true,” Salarino said. “I just remembered something. I talked with a Frenchman yesterday, who told me that in the narrow sea that parts the French and the English — the English Channel — there miscarried a richly loaded vessel of our country. It wrecked and all its cargo was lost. I thought about Antonio when the Frenchman told me this, and I silently hoped that the wrecked ship was not one of his.”

“It is best for you to tell Antonio what you heard, but do not tell him suddenly because the bad news may make him grieve.”

“No kinder gentleman than Antonio treads the Earth,” Salarino said. “I saw Bassanio and Antonio part. Bassanio told him he would hurry and return home again, but Antonio replied, ‘Do not hurry. Do not rush things for my sake, Bassanio. Instead, take your time and do things the right way at the right time. And as for the contract that I made with the Jew to borrow money, do not let it bother you. Instead, think about wooing Portia and being in love. Be merry, and chiefly think about courtship and such fair demonstrations of love as shall conveniently become you there.’ Antonio’s eyes were big with tears. Turning his face away, he put his arm around Bassanio, and with touching affection he shook Bassanio’s hand; and so they parted.”

“I think that Bassanio is the reason Antonio stays alive,” Solanio said. “And now, let us go and find Antonio so that we can cheer him up. He is indulging too much in sadness.”

“Good idea,” Salarino said. “Let’s do that.”

— 2.9 —

Nerissa and a servant entered the room with the three caskets.

She said, “Quick, quick, please draw the curtain immediately. The Prince of Arragon has taken his oath, and he is coming here to make his choice of caskets.”

Portia, the Prince of Arragon, and some servants, both hers and his, entered the room.

“Look, here are the three caskets, noble Prince,” Portia said. “If you chose the casket that contains my picture, you and I shall be immediately married, but if you fail to choose the right casket, then you must leave immediately with no arguing.”

“I have sworn an oath to do three things if I fail to choose the right casket,” the Prince of Arragon said. “I must never tell anyone which casket I chose, I must never get married, and I must leave you immediately.”

“Those are the three things that everyone must swear if they come here and attempt to win my worthless self.”

“And those are the three things that I have sworn. May Fortune lead me now to what my heart hopes for!

“The three caskets are made of gold, silver, and base lead.

“The lead casket says, ‘*Whoever chooses me must give and hazard all he has.*’ Well, lead casket, you must be more beautiful before I give and hazard all I have for you.

“What does the gold casket say? Let me see. ‘*Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire.*’ What many men desire! That phrase ‘many men’ may refer to the multitude of fools, who choose according to a showy exterior and do not seek to learn more than their foolish eyes show them. But eyes see only the exterior and not the interior. They do not see everything and so cannot always help a person make the best decision. People who choose on the basis of a flashy exterior are like those birds called swifts that build their nests on the sides of buildings and so expose their nestlings to bad weather. I will not choose what many men desire because I will not go along with common spirits and will not classify myself as one of the barbarous multitudes.

“Why, then let me look at you, you silver treasure house. Tell me once more what is engraved on you. ‘*Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.*’ That is well said because who shall go about to try to cheat fortune and be honorable without the stamp of merit? Let no one presume to wear an undeserved dignity. I wish that estates of the realm such as nobility, ranks such as Earls and Barons, and offices that are official appointments such as the Chancellorship were not obtained corruptly. I wish that the merit of the man is what would get the man magnificent and glorious honor. If that were so, many men who now wear hats in the presence of other, better men would remove their hats and stand bareheaded to show respect to the other, better men! Many men who now give orders would instead be obeying orders! Many men who are now nobles would instead be peasants! And many men who are now the lowest of the low and ruined by bad times would be among the highest of the high!

“Well, which casket shall I choose? ‘*Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.*’ I will assume that I am deserving of this lady. Give me the key to the silver casket, and I will immediately unlock it and find my fortune.”

The Prince of Arragon opened the silver casket and stood silently.

Portia said, “You are pausing for a long time. I assume that you do not like what you see.”

“What’s this?” the Prince of Arragon said. “Here is the portrait of a goggle-eyed idiot presenting to me a scroll! I will read it. This portrait is much unlike Portia. It is much unlike what I hoped to find here and much unlike what I deserved to find here! ‘*Whoever chooses me shall have as much as he deserves.*’ Do I deserve to have no more than a fool’s head? Is that my prize? Do I deserve to have no better?”

“The guilty person on trial and the fair judge are two separate people. They ought not to do each other’s jobs,” Portia said.

The Prince of Arragon said, “What is here on the scroll? I will read it out loud:

*“The fire has seven times tested*

*“And purified this silver casket.*

*“Seven times tested that judgment is,*

*“That did never choose amiss.*

*“Some there be that shadows kiss.*

*“Such have but a shadow’s bliss.*

*“There be fools alive, certainly,*

*“Whose foolishness is hidden by silver,*

*“Whether by silver hair or a wealth of silver coins.*

*“This casket’s interior was hidden by silver.*

*“Take what wife you will to bed,*

*“Fools do not keep their oaths,*

*“I will ever be your fool’s head:*

*“So be gone: you have been well dealt with.*

“I shall appear to be even more of a fool if I longer linger here. With one fool’s head I came to woo, but I go away with two. Sweet, adieu. I’ll keep my oath, and I will patiently bear my sorrow.”

The Prince of Arragon and his attendants departed.

Portia said, “The Prince of Arragon was a fool, and thus has the candle singed the moth. Oh, these deliberating fools! When they choose, they choose wrongly. The fools’ reasoning gives them the wisdom to choose the wrong casket.”

Nerissa said, “This ancient saying is no heresy: Hanging and wiving go by destiny. Whether or not we are hung is destined, and whom we marry or not marry is also destined.”

Portia said, “Draw the curtain shut, Nerissa.”

A servant entered and asked, “Where is my lady?”

Portia replied, “Here I am,” then she joked, referring to the servant, “What does my lord want?”

“Madam, there has alighted at your gate a young Venetian man, one who comes before to let us know that his lord is coming. From his lord he has brought greetings: compliments, polite speeches, and gifts of rich value. I have never seen so promising and handsome an ambassador of love. This young Venetian man is like a sweet day in April. The April day foretells a summer that is rich in flowers, and this young Venetian man foretells a lord who promises to be a worthy husband.”

“Say no more, please,” Portia said to the servant. “I am half afraid that you will say soon that he is a relative of yours because you are using such elegant language to praise him.”

She added, “Come, Nerissa; I long to see quick Cupid’s messenger who comes so courteously.”

“I hope that he is the messenger of Bassanio,” Nerissa said. “Cupid, god of love, so let it be so, if you will it so.”

## CHAPTER 3

— 3.1 —

On a street in Venice, Solanio and Salarino were talking.

Solanio said, “What is the news that you have heard at the merchants’ exchange?”

“The rumor persists — with no one contradicting it — that one of Antonio’s merchant ships has wrecked on the narrow seas,” Salarino said. “People say that it wrecked on the Goodwin Sands in the English Channel. The Goodwin Sands is a very dangerous and fatal sandbank where the carcasses of many gallant ships lie buried. If my old friend and gossip Dame Rumor is an honest woman of her word, Antonio has suffered a grievous loss.”

“I would say that Dame Rumor were as lying a gossip in saying that as any old woman who ever munched ginger cookies or made her neighbors believe she wept for the death of a third husband,” Solanio said. “But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk or taking way too many words to say a simple thing, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio — oh, I wish that I had a title that was good enough to put in front of his name! — ”

“Please,” Salarino said. “Finish your sentence. Take your words from a gallop to a full stop.”

“Ha! Funny!” Solanio said. “But the end of my sentence is that Antonio has lost one of his merchant ships.”

“I hope that one ship is all that he will lose.”

“Let me say ‘Amen!’ quickly,” Solanio said, “lest the Devil frustrate my prayer, for here the Devil comes in the likeness of a Jew.”

Shylock walked up to them, and Solanio said, “How are you, Shylock! What news do you hear among the merchants?”

“You know — no one knows as well as you — of my daughter’s flight,” Shylock replied.

“That’s the truth,” Salarino said. “I, for my part, knew the tailor who made the wings your daughter used to fly away with.”

“And Shylock, for his own part, knew that the bird was fledged and ready to fly, and when a bird is fledged it is eager to leave home,” Solanio said.

“My daughter is damned for what she did,” Shylock said.

“That’s the truth,” Salarino said, “if the Devil is judging her.”

“My own flesh and blood rebelled against me!” Shylock said.

“You don’t say, old, old man!” Solanio said. “Your own flesh and blood rebelled against you! At your advanced age, how was your penis able to rise up against you!”

“I say,” Shylock said, “that my daughter is my flesh and blood.”

“There is more difference between your flesh and hers than there is between jet black and ivory white,” Salarino said. “There is more difference between your bloods than there is between bad red wine and good Rhenish white wine. But tell us, have you heard whether Antonio has had any losses at sea or not?”

“There I have made another bad bargain,” Shylock said. “Antonio is a bankrupt, a prodigal, a man who scarcely dares to show his head at the merchants’ exchange. He is a beggar, he who used to come so smugly and self-satisfied to the marketplace. Let him remember that he has a contract with me and that he must not renege on it! Antonio has been accustomed to call me a usurer. Let him remember that he has a contract with me and that he must not renege on it! He was accustomed to lend money at no interest as an act of Christian charity. Let him remember that he has a contract with me and that he must not renege on it!”

“Why, I am sure, if he reneges on his contract,” Salarino said, “you will not take a pound of his flesh. What would that be good for?”

“I could use it as bait for fish,” Shylock replied. “If Antonio’s flesh will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He has acted badly toward me, and he has cost me half a million ducats in my business. He has laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my Jewish nation, thwarted my business deals, cooled and alienated my friends, and heated my enemies to be even more against me.

“What is his reason for so treating me? His reason is that I am a Jew. Has not a Jew eyes? Has not a Jew hands, organs, limbs, senses, affections, passions? Are not Jews fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not seek revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.

“If a Jew should wrong a Christian, what does the Christian do? Practice Christian humility? No. Get revenge? Yes. If a Christian should wrong a Jew, what should the Jew do according to the examples set by the Christians? Exercise forbearance? No. According to Christian examples, the Jew should seek revenge. The villainy that you Christians teach me, I will practice, and I will do my best to improve on the examples and be more villainous than you Christians.”

One of Antonio’s servants arrived and said to Solanio and Salarino, “Gentlemen, my master, Antonio, is at his house and desires to speak with you both.”

Salarino replied, “We have been up and down and all around seeking him.”

Tubal, one of Shylock’s Jewish friends, arrived.

Solanio said, “Here comes another of the tribe of Jews; a third Jew cannot be found who would match these two unless the Devil converts and becomes a Jew.”

Solanio, Salarino, and Antonio’s servant departed.

Shylock said, “How are you, Tubal! What news do you bring me from Genoa? Did you find my daughter?”

“I often heard news about her, but I could not find her,” Tubal said.

“This is bad news indeed!” Shylock said. “I have lost so much wealth. One of the diamonds my daughter stole from me cost me two thousand ducats at the great annual jewel fair in Frankfort, Germany! The curse never fell upon our Jewish nation until now — at least, I never felt it until now. Daniel 9:11 says, *‘Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.’* I lost two thousand ducats with the loss of that jewel, and my daughter also stole other precious, precious jewels.

“I wish that my daughter were dead and lying at my feet, and the jewels were in her earrings! I wish that she were lying at my feet in a coffin, and that my ducats were in the coffin!

“No news of them? Why, that’s the way it is. I do not know how much I have spent in the search for my jewels and my ducats. I have suffered loss upon loss! The thief fled with so much of my wealth, and I have spent so much of my wealth to find the thief, and I have found no satisfaction, no revenge. The only ill luck I have seen is what falls upon my own shoulders. I hear no sighs except those that are formed by own breath. I see no tears but those that I have shed.”

“Other men have ill luck, too,” Tubal replied. “Antonio, as I heard in Genoa — ”

“What? Antonio has had ill luck? What ill luck?”

“One of his merchant ships, one coming from Tripolis, wrecked.”

“I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?”

Tubal replied, “I spoke with some of the sailors who escaped the shipwreck.”

“I thank you, good Tubal. This is good news, good news! Where did you hear this news? In Genoa?”

“Your daughter spent in Genoa, so I heard, eighty ducats in one night.”

“It is as if you have stuck a dagger in me,” Shylock said. “I shall never see my gold again. My daughter spent fourscore ducats on a single occasion! Fourscore ducats!”

“Several of Antonio’s creditors came with me as I traveled back to Venice. They swear that Antonio cannot avoid bankruptcy.”

“I am very glad to hear it,” Shylock said. “I’ll plague him; I’ll torture him. I am glad to hear that he will go bankrupt.”

“One of Antonio’s creditors showed me a ring that he had received from your daughter in a trade for a monkey.”

“Damn!” Shylock said. “You are torturing me! That was my turquoise ring. Leah gave it to me when I was a bachelor. I would not have traded it for a wilderness of monkeys.”

“But Antonio is certainly undone. He has no choice but to go bankrupt.”

“That’s true, that’s very true,” Shylock said. “Go, Tubal, find a police officer for me and give him the amount of money that he requires to arrest someone for nonpayment of debts. Engage the police officer a fortnight before Antonio is required to repay the money he borrowed from me. I will cut the heart out of him, if he forfeits. If Antonio is not around any longer, I can make whatever business deals I want to make and make whatever profit I want to make. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. I need to make an oath. Go, good Tubal; meet me at our synagogue, Tubal.”

— 3.2 —

Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and some attendants entered the room that contained the three caskets.

Portia was in love with Bassanio, but she wished to hide it and deny it.

She said to him, “Please, wait. Tarry a day or two before you guess which casket holds my picture because if you choose the wrong casket I will lose your company and will no longer see you. Therefore, wait a while before you choose a casket. There is something that tells me, but it is not love, that I do not want to lose your company. Take my advice. Hatred does not give this kind of advice; if I hated you, I would not give you this advice.

“But in case you should not understand me well — and yet a virgin has no tongue but thought, for it is said that maidens should be seen and not heard — I would detain you here one month or two before you choose a casket and try to win me as your wife. I could tell you which is the casket that contains my picture, but I have sworn not to do that and so I will not tell you. Because of that, you may choose the wrong casket and not marry me. If you do choose the wrong casket, you will make me wish a sin — you will make me wish that I had broken my oath and told you which casket to choose.

“Shame on your eyes because they have bewitched me and divided me. One half of me is yours, and the other half is also yours. I should say that the other half of me is mine, but what is mine is yours, and so it is also yours. These evil times put bars between the owners and their rights — they keep owners from claiming what is theirs!

“If it should happen that you choose the wrong casket and I am lost to you, let Fortune — not I — go to Hell for depriving you of what belongs to you. I speak too long, but I speak to drag out the time, to stretch it and to draw it out at length, in order to keep you from choosing a casket.”

“Let me choose,” Bassanio said. “The way I feel now, it is as if I am being tortured on the rack because I do not know whether you will be mine.”

“Tortured on the rack, Bassanio!” Portia cried. “Traitors are tortured on the rack to force them to confess. Confess to me what treason is mingled with your love.”

“The only treason is the ugly treason of mistrust,” Bassanio said. “I am not certain that I will choose the right casket, and therefore I fear that I may not be able to marry you and enjoy having you as my wife. Snow and fire are as likely to be friends and live together as I am to be treasonous to you, my love.”

“I am afraid of your words — afraid that you say them only because you are being tortured on the rack. Men who are being tortured on the rack will say anything.”

“Promise me my life, and I’ll confess the truth,” Bassanio said.

“Well, then, confess and live,” Portia said.

“To live is to love. ‘Confess’ and ‘love’ would have been my entire confession,” Bassanio said. “I confess that I love you. This is a happy torment, when my torturer teaches me the answers that will set me free. But now allow me to choose a casket and see my fortune.”

“Choose, then!” Portia said. “My picture is locked in one of the caskets. If you really love me, you will choose the casket with my picture. Such was the intention of my dying father when he designed this test, and good men have the gift of prophecy when they die.

“Nerissa and all the rest of you, stand a little distance away. Let music play while Bassanio makes his choice. Then, if he chooses the wrong casket, he will make a swan-like end — the swan sings its beautiful song only when it is dying — and vanish away with the music. That the comparison of the swan song and this music may be more proper, my eyes shall be the stream and the watery deathbed for him. If he chooses wrongly, I will cry and he shall drown in my tears.

“But he may choose the right casket, and what is the music then? Then the music is like the flourish of trumpets when true subjects bow before a new-crowned Monarch.

“The music will be like those dulcet sounds at break of day that creep into the dreaming bridegroom’s ears, and summon him to go to church to be married. Now the bridegroom goes, with no less presence, but with much more love, than young Hercules, when he redeemed the virgin tribute paid by weeping Trojans to the sea-monster. Hesione, the sister of Priam, the future King of Troy, was chained to a rock on the shore so she would be sacrificed to the sea-monster, but Hercules killed the sea-monster and saved her life.

“I will stand here and represent Hesione, the sacrifice. The other women here can represent the Trojan wives, who, with tear-stained faces, came forth to witness the outcome of Hercules’ intended rescue. Go, Hercules! If you continue to live and are not killed by the sea-monster, then I will continue to live. With much, much more dismay do I view the battle than you who are fighting in it.”

Music played, and Portia sang this song:

*“Tell me where is fancy bred,*

*“In the heart, or in the head?*

*“How begot, how nourished?”*

The women in the room sang, *“Reply, reply.”*

Portia continued to sing:

*“It is engendered in the eyes,*

*“With gazing fed; and fancy dies*

*“In the cradle where it lies.*

*“Let us all ring fancy’s knell*

*“I’ll begin it — ding, dong, bell. ”*

The women in the room sang, *“Ding, dong, bell.”*

The song was about “love” and love. “Love” — a superficial fancy — is foolish affection brought about only by the eyes. A man can see a pretty woman and fall in “love.” A woman can see a handsome man and fall in “love.” The song warned that this “love” dies quickly and that this “love” ought to die quickly. A deeper love is needed that will not quickly die. One can conclude that the deeper love is risky and that whoever wants true love must give and hazard all he — or she — has. Whoever wants it must go deeper than surface appearances.

Having listened to the song, Bassanio knew which casket to choose. His “torturer” had taught him the answer that would set him free.

Bassanio said quietly to himself, “Surface appearances may be much different from the truth that is within. The world is continually deceived by ornament and appearance.

“In law, what plea is so tainted and corrupt that it cannot, being seasoned with a gracious and eloquent voice, hide evil? It is like rotten food whose foulness is masked with spices.

“In religion, what damned error — heresy — exists that some sober brow will not bless it and approve it with a text quoted from the Bible and hide its grossness with a fair ornament?

“There is no vice so simple and uncomplicated that it cannot assume some mark of virtue on his outward parts.

“How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false as stairs or ropes made of sand, wear yet upon their chins the manly beards of Hercules and frowning Mars? Yet, these cowards lack the red blood of courage that Hercules and Mars have in abundance. They grow beards to look manly but lack manliness.

“Look on beauty, and you shall see that it is purchased by the ounce — both cosmetics and hair are bought by the ounce. These things work a miracle in nature — people who wear the most cosmetics and wear the most hair that did not grow on their head are the most morally dissolute. Those curled snaky golden locks that make such wanton and promiscuous gambols with the wind, those golden locks that appear to be so beautiful, are actually a gift from someone else’s head, a head that is now in a sepulcher, a head whose hair was harvested to be sold.

“Therefore, ornament is the treacherous shore of a most dangerous sea. Ornament is the beauteous scarf that veils a ‘beauty’ who is not beautiful. Ornament is the appearance of ‘truth’ which cunning times display to entrap the wisest.

“Therefore, thou gaudy gold, I will have nothing to do with you. You are hard food for Midas, whom Apollo granted the wish that everything that he touched would turn to gold. After this wish was granted, Midas was no longer able to eat or drink.

“And I want nothing to do with you, silver, you pale and common drudge that is made into coins that pass from man to man.

“But you, you poor lead that threaten rather than promise anything, your paleness moves me more than eloquence. I choose the lead casket, and may joy be the consequence!”

Portia thought, *All my other emotions fly into the air and disappear. Gone are my doubtful thoughts, and rashly embraced despair, and shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! Only love remains, and it is not moderate. Love, be moderate; lessen your ecstasy. Rein in your joy and make it moderate; reduce this excess. I feel too much your blessing: Make it less. I am afraid that I will grow ill and die from feeling too much happiness.*

Bassanio asked, "What will I find in here?"

He opened the lead casket and said, "I find Portia's picture! What artist — a demi-god! — has created a portrait so like the living person! Are the eyes in this portrait moving? Do they reflect the movement of my own eyes? Here are two lips that are parted with sugar breath. So sweet a barrier — her breath — has parted the sweet friends that are her lips. Here in her hair the painter has played the spider and has woven a golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men faster and more securely than gnats are caught in cobwebs. Her eyes — how could the artist see to paint them? After the artist had painted one of her eyes, I would think its beauty would have dazzled and blinded him and made him unable to paint her other eye. Still, as much as my praise falls short of what this portrait deserves, just as much does this painting fall short of capturing the beauty of the living woman depicted in it.

"Here is a scroll that will tell me my fortune. I will read it out loud:

*"You who choose not by looks and view,*

*"Choose fairly and choose truly!*

*"Since this fortune falls to you,*

*"Be content and seek no new fortune,*

*"If you are well pleased with this*

*"And accept this fortune as your bliss,*

*"Turn to where your lady is*

*"And claim her with a loving kiss.*

"This is a kind scroll. Fair lady, if I have your permission, I come by the authority of the scroll to give and receive a kiss. I am like one of two people contending for a prize, one who thinks he has done well in people's eyes, one who hears applause and general shouting, one who is giddy in spirit, but who is still gazing in doubt whether these pearls of praise be for him or not. Thus stand I, three times beautiful lady. I am as doubtful whether what I see is true, until it is confirmed, signed, and ratified by you."

"You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand — such as I am," Portia replied. "Though for myself alone, I would not be ambitious in my wish, to wish myself much better; yet, for you I would be trebled twenty times myself. For you, I would be a thousand times more beautiful, ten thousand times richer. Only so that you would value me highly, I wish that I could exceed all calculations in virtue, beauty, possessions, and friends. However, the full sum of me is a sum that can be calculated. What gross sum is that? I am an unlessoned girl; I am unschooled, unpracticed. It is fortunate that I am not so old that I cannot learn. Even more fortunate, I am not so dull but that I can learn. Most fortunate of all is that my gentle spirit commits itself to your spirit to be directed and educated; you will be my lord, my governor, my King.

“Because we are engaged to be married, I am now part of you, and what is mine is now yours. Just now I was the lord of this fair mansion, I was master of my servants, I was Queen over myself. But right now, this house, these servants and I myself are yours, my lord. I give them to you, and I give you this ring; if you ever part from, lose, or give away this ring, let it foretell the ruin and decay of your love and be my opportunity to denounce you.”

Bassanio replied, “Madam, you have taken away all my words; I do not know what to say. Only my blood — my passion — speaks to you in my veins, and my mind suffers such confusion. It is like after a Prince has beautifully given a speech, and the multitude of hearers, all buzzing with pleasure, speak separately but their sentences and sounds all blend together in a hurrah of joy. When this ring that you have given me parts from this finger, then life will part from me. When I no longer wear this ring, then you may say boldly that I, Bassanio, am dead.”

Nerissa said, “My lord and lady, it is now time for us, who have stood by and seen our wishes for your happiness be granted, to say to you, ‘Good joy. Good joy, my lord and lady!’”

Bassanio’s being engaged to marry a very rich woman greatly elevated his social status, something that Gratiano acknowledged in the way he referred to him: “My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady, Portia, I wish you all the joy that you can wish because I am sure that you will not wish any of my joy away from me. When you two are married, I ask you, please, that at that time I may be married, too.”

“I grant that with all my heart,” Bassanio said, “provided that you can find someone to marry you.”

“I thank you, your lordship, because you yourself have gotten me a woman who will marry me,” Gratiano said. “My eyes, my lord, can look as swiftly as yours. You saw the mistress, Portia. I beheld the waiting-gentlewoman, Nerissa. You loved, and I loved. I wasted no time wooing Nerissa, just as you wasted no time wooing Portia. Your fortune stood upon the casket there, and so did mine, too, as it happened. I wooed Nerissa so hard that I was sweating, and I sweat so much that the roof of my mouth was dry because of the oaths of love I swore. At last, if her promise lasts and Nerissa keeps her promise to marry me, I will marry beautiful Nerissa, who said that she would give me her love and marry me, provided that you won and married her mistress, Portia.”

Portia asked, “Is this true, Nerissa?”

“Madam, it is, as long as you approve.”

“And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?” Bassanio asked. “Do you have good intentions toward Nerissa?”

“Yes,” Gratiano replied. “I swear it by my Christian faith, my lord.”

“Our wedding feast shall be much honored by your marriage,” Bassanio said.

Gratiano said to Nerissa, “Let’s bet them a thousand ducats that we shall have a son before they do.”

“Do you want to gather the stake of money now and put it down?” Nerissa asked.

“If my ‘stake’ always stays down and is never erect, we shall never win the bet,” Gratiano said. “But, look, some people are coming here. Who are they? Lorenzo and his infidel, Jessica the

Jew? What, and my old Venetian friend Salario?"

Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salario entered the room.

Bassanio said, "Lorenzo and Salario, you are welcome here, if I, in the newness of my household authority, have the power to welcome you. Sweet Portia, with your permission, I bid my true friends and countrymen welcome."

"So do I, my lord," Portia said. "They are entirely welcome here."

"I thank your honor," Lorenzo said. "I had not intended to have seen you here, but I met Salario along the way, and he entreated me, not allowing me to decline, to come here with him."

"That is true, my lord," Salario said. "And I have a good reason for it. Signior Antonio commends him to you. Signior Antonio praises Lorenzo highly."

Salario gave Bassanio a letter.

Bassanio said, "Before I open this letter, please tell me how my good friend Antonio is doing."

"He is not sick, my lord," Salario said, "unless it is mentally. He is not well, either, unless it is mentally. His letter there will tell you how he is doing."

Gratiano said, "Nerissa, welcome yonder stranger, Jessica the Jew." This was considerate of Gratiano.

He added, "Let's shake hands, Salario."

They shook hands, and Gratiano said to him, "How is that royal merchant, good Antonio, doing? I know he will be glad of the success of Bassanio and me. We are Jasons; each of us has won the golden fleece."

"You may have won the golden fleece, but I wish that you won a fleet of golden ships — the ships that Antonio has lost," Salario replied.

Portia said, "The content of the letter that you gave to Bassanio is bitter and cursed. The color is draining from Bassanio's cheeks. A dear friend of his must have died; nothing else in the world could so change the complexion of a normal and healthy and steadfast man. Bassanio grows worse and worse! Please, Bassanio, because we are almost married, I am already one with you. I am half yourself, and I must have half of anything that this letter brings you."

"Sweet Portia, in this letter I have read some of the most unpleasant words that ever appeared on paper! Gentle lady, when I first told you that I loved you, I freely and openly told you that all the wealth I had was in the gentlemanly blood that runs in my veins — my social class is that of a gentleman. What I said then is true, and yet, dear lady, you shall see that when I told you that my wealth was nothing, I was then bragging. I should then have told you that I was worth less than nothing; for, indeed, I have borrowed money from a dear friend, who borrowed money from his worst enemy in order to lend me the money I needed. Here is a letter, my lady. If the paper the words are written on is like the body of my friend, every word in it would be a gaping wound from which pours the blood that is needed to keep my friend alive.

"But is it true, Salario? Have all of Antonio's business ventures failed? What, was not even one of them successful? Antonio had ships sailing home from Tripolis, from Mexico and England,

and from Lisbon, Barbary, and India. Didn't even one merchant ship escape the dreadful touch of rocks that sink merchant ships and ruin merchants?"

"Not even one, my lord," Salario replied. "Besides, it appears that even if Antonio had the money he needs to pay back the Jew, the Jew would not take it. Never did I know a creature that bears the shape of man be so keen and greedy to destroy a man. Shylock appeals to the Duke morning and night for what he calls justice, and he says that if the Venetian government fails to give him justice that it will not be safe for merchants to do business there. Twenty merchants, the Duke himself, and the most important Venetian nobles have all argued with him, but none can keep him from insisting on his malicious desire to get what Antonio promised to give — a pound of Antonio's flesh — if he did not pay back on the due date the money that he had borrowed."

Jessica, Shylock's estranged daughter, said, "When I was with him, I heard him swear to Tubal and to Chus, his Jewish countrymen, that he would rather have Antonio's flesh than twenty times the value of the sum that Antonio owes him. I know, my lord, that if law, authority, and power do not stop my father, that it will go hard with poor Antonio."

Portia asked, "Is Antonio your dear friend who is thus in trouble?"

"Antonio is the dearest friend to me, the kindest man, the best-dispositioned and unwearied spirit in doing courtesies, and one in whom the ancient Roman virtue of honor more appears than in any man who draws breath in Italy," Bassanio replied.

"How much money does he owe the Jew?" Portia asked.

"He borrowed for me from the Jew three thousand ducats," Bassanio said.

"What, no more?" Portia, a very wealthy woman, said. "Pay him six thousand, and cancel the contract. If you have to, pay him double six thousand, or pay him triple that. Do that before a friend of this description shall lose a single hair through Bassanio's fault.

"Bassanio, first go with me to church and make me your wife, and then you shall sail away to Venice and go to your friend. Never shall you lie by my side with an unquiet soul. You shall have gold to pay this petty debt twenty times over: When it is paid, bring your true friend back here with you. My waiting-gentlewoman Nerissa and I will in the meantime live the way that virgins and widows do. Come, let's hurry to the church! You must go away from here on your wedding day. Bid your friends welcome, and show them a merry face. Since you are dearly bought, I will love you dearly. But let me now hear the letter of your friend."

Bassanio read the letter out loud:

*"Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried and sunk, my creditors are growing cruel, my assets are very low, and I have been unable to repay the Jew the money I owe him. Because of that, I now owe him a pound of my flesh. Since it is impossible that I continue to live after I pay him what I owe him, all debts are cleared and forgiven between you and me if I can see you when I die. Notwithstanding, do what it pleases you to do. If your friendship for me does not persuade you to come to see me die, don't let my letter persuade you."*

"Bassanio, my love, finish your business here quickly and go to Venice!" Portia said.

“Since I have your permission to go away, I will leave quickly,” Bassanio said, “but, until I come back again, no bed shall ever be guilty of my stay. I will not sleep until I return to you. No bed will hold me back, and no rest will separate us.”

— 3.3 —

On a street in Venice stood Shylock, Salarino, Antonio, and a jailer.

Shylock said, “Jailer, keep a close watch on Antonio. Do not talk to me about mercy. This is the fool who lent out money free of interest. Jailer, watch him closely.”

“Listen to me, good Shylock,” Antonio said.

“We have a contract,” Shylock said to Antonio. “It is a legal contract, and I have sworn an oath that I will enforce it. You called me a dog before you had a reason to call me that. Therefore, since I am a dog, beware my fangs: The Duke shall grant me justice.”

Shylock then said, “I do wonder, you wicked jailer, why you are so foolish that you appear outside the jail with Antonio just because he asked you to.”

“Please, listen to me,” Antonio said to Shylock.

“I will enforce the contract that you signed,” Shylock said to Antonio. “I will not listen to you speak. We have a legal contract, so therefore stop your begging. I will not be made a soft and dull-eyed, easily manipulated fool. I will not nod in agreement with what you plead, will not relent, and will not sigh, and I will not yield to Christian pleaders on your behalf. Do not follow me. I want to hear no pleading. I do want the enforcement of our contract.”

Shylock angrily exited.

Salarino said, “He is the most hard-hearted cur that has ever lived among men.”

“Let him alone,” Antonio said. “I will follow him no more and plead for a mercy that he will not grant me. He seeks my life, and I well know the reason why. I have often helped people who complained to me that they could not repay money they owed to him, and so Shylock did not profit by the forfeiture of their contracts. That is why Shylock hates me.”

“I am sure that the Duke will never allow Shylock to take a pound of your flesh,” Salarino said.

“The Duke cannot deny the course of law,” Antonio said. “Merchants who trade here but are not citizens of Venice rely on the law to protect their interests. If the Duke does not enforce the law in my case, it will affect negatively the business interests and prosperity of Venice because people of all nations do so much trade and business here. Therefore, let us go. These griefs and losses of mine have made me lose so much weight that I shall hardly spare the pound of flesh I must give tomorrow to my bloodthirsty creditor.”

“Well, jailer, let us go on. I pray to God that Bassanio shall come to see me pay his debt. If that happens, then I do not care what else happens!”

— 3.4 —

In a room in Portia’s house in Belmont, she, Nerissa, Lorenzo, and Jessica were talking. Balthasar, who was one of her servants, was also present.

Lorenzo said to Portia, “Madam, although I say it in your presence, you have a noble and true conception of godlike friendship, as you have shown very strongly in bearing thus the absence of Bassanio, your lord and husband. But if you knew Antonio, to whom you show this honor and send relief, and how true a gentleman he is and how dear a friend to my lord your husband, I know you would be prouder of this good deed than of ordinary acts of goodness.”

Portia replied, “I have never repented the doing of good deeds, and I shall not repent this good deed I do now. Bassanio and Antonio are two companions who talk together and spend time together. They are souls who equally share friendship for each other, and in such cases the two friends equally share features, character, and spirit. That makes me think that this Antonio, because he is the bosom friend of my lord, must be like my lord. If that is true, how little is the money I have given to Bassanio to save the life of a person who is the likeness of my soul.

“A genuine friend is like a second self. Antonio is the genuine friend of Bassanio, and so Antonio is the second self of Bassanio. I am one with Bassanio, and so Antonio is the second self of me and therefore he is the likeness of my soul. I have given money to save the semblance of my soul from a state of Hellish misery! By saving Antonio, I am saving myself, and therefore I do not want to hear praise of my ‘good deed’ — a ‘good deed’ in which I save myself. Therefore, speak no more about it.

“Lorenzo, I now commit into your hands the care and management of my house until my lord and husband’s return. As for me, I have made a secret vow toward Heaven to live in prayer and contemplation, attended only by Nerissa here, until her husband and my husband return. A monastery is located two miles away from here, and there we will reside until our husbands return. I ask you not to deny my request that necessity and my friendship for you require me to ask of you.”

“Madam, with all my heart I shall obey you and your fair commands.”

“I have already informed my servants that you will take over for a while, and they will obey the orders of you and Jessica until Lord Bassanio and I return. And so farewell, until we shall meet again.”

“May fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!” Lorenzo said.

“I wish your ladyship all your heart’s content,” Jessica said.

“I thank you for your wish, and I wish you the same thing,” Portia said. “May you fare well, Jessica.”

Jessica and Lorenzo left the room.

Portia said, “Now, Balthasar, I have always found you to be honest and trustworthy, and I hope that now I may find that you have not changed. Take this letter and go as fast as a man can go to Padua, at whose university civil law is studied. Give my letter to my kinsman, Doctor Bellario, who is a doctor of law. Take whatever legal notes and lawyer’s garments he gives to you as quickly as you can to the public ferry that travels to and from Venice. Waste no time in words, but leave immediately. I will be at the ferry before you get there.”

“Madam, I go with all appropriate speed,” Balthasar said.

He departed to perform his task.

Portia said, "Come, Nerissa, I have work in hand that you do not yet know about. We'll see our husbands before they shall even miss us."

"Shall our husbands see us?" Nerissa asked.

Portia answered, "They shall see us, Nerissa, but we will be wearing male clothing and so they shall think that we possess the male appendage that we lack.

"I will bet you that when we are both wearing male clothing that I will be the more masculine. I will carry my dagger with the finer grace, and speak between the change of man and boy with a high-pitched voice, and I will turn two of my usual small steps into one manly stride, and I will speak about fights like a fine bragging youth, and I will tell quaint lies about what ladies have between their legs and about how honorable ladies have sought my love, which I denied them, and so they fell sick and died. I could not keep them from dying — because I lack the necessary equipment to requite their love. I will feel sorry that they died because of their love for me, and I will wish that I had not killed them. I will tell twenty of these puny and feeble lies, and men will think that I have been out of school for a year and so I am a real man. I have memorized a thousand crude tricks and lies used by these bragging Jacks, and I will use them when I am disguised as a young man."

"Why, shall we turn to men?" Nerissa said.

"Good Heavens, what kind of a question is that?" Portia said. "If you were overheard by a lewd interpreter, he would think that you are talking about turning over in bed so that you are facing a man! But come, I'll tell you all about my plan while we are travelling in my coach, which is waiting for us at the park gate. Therefore, let us make haste and go away because we must travel twenty miles today."

— 3.5 —

In a corner of the garden of Portia's house, Launcelet the jester and Jessica the Jew were talking.

"Yes, I truly believe that you are damned," Launcelet said, "because, you see, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise you that I am afraid that you are damned. I have always plainly spoken my mind to you, and so now I speak to you my agitated cogitation of the matter. Therefore, be of good cheer because truly I think you are damned. There is only one hope in this situation that can do you any good; and that is only a kind of bastard hope."

"Please tell me what hope is that."

"You may hope that your father did not beget you, that you are not Shylock the Jew's daughter."

"That is a kind of bastard hope, indeed," Jessica said. "I would be a bastard indeed, but in that case, the sins of my mother would be visited upon me. The child of a Jewish woman is a Jew."

"In that case," Launcelet said, "truly I fear you are damned both by father and mother. When I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother. Scylla was a monster, and Charybdis was a whirlpool. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus had to sail between them."

Launcelot thought, *I fall into Charybdis, your mother. That can mean, I fall into your mother's hole. Yes, I just made an I-slept-with-yo'-momma joke.*

Launcelot concluded, "Well, you are damned and gone to Hell either way."

Jessica said, "I shall be saved by my husband; he has made me a Christian. Remember 1 Corinthians 7:14: *"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."*

"In that case, your husband is the more to blame," Launcelot said. "We Christians were numerous enough before. Fortunately, we were not so numerous that we could not live peacefully next to each other. But this making of more Christians will make the price of hogs rise. Jews do not eat pork and bacon. If they convert and begin to eat meat from pigs, soon bacon will be so expensive that no one will be able to buy it."

"Launcelot, I will tell my husband, Lorenzo, what you said. Here he comes."

Lorenzo said, "I shall grow jealous of you soon, Launcelot, if you keep getting my wife into corners."

Jessica said, "No, you need not fear us doing anything immoral, Lorenzo. Launcelot and I are arguing. He tells me flatly that there is no mercy for me in Heaven because I am a Jew's daughter, and he says that you are not a good member of society because by converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork."

"I can defend myself from the charge you make against me, Launcelot, better than you can defend yourself from the charge of making the belly of Portia's black servant swell up," Lorenzo said. "The Moor is with child by you, Launcelot."

"It is much that the Moor should be more — bigger — than reasonable," Launcelot said, "but even if she is less than a chaste woman, she is still more than I took her to be."

Launcelot thought, *Yes, she is more than when I took her. I took her sexually, and now her womb is populated.*

Lorenzo said, "How every fool can play upon words and commit wordplay! Puns, puns, and more puns! I think the best wit will soon be silence, and only parrots will be praised for talking. Go inside, Launcelot, and tell the servants to prepare for dinner."

"The servants are prepared for dinner," Launcelot said. "All of them are hungry and have good appetites."

"Good God!" Lorenzo said. "What a wit-cracker you are! Then tell the servants to prepare dinner."

"That is done, too, sir," Launcelot replied, "but 'cover' is the right word. The table must be covered with a tablecloth for dinner, and the food must be put in covered dishes so it can be brought to the table."

"In that case, then 'cover' is the word I use, Launcelet."

"Cover my head with a hat, sir!" Launcelot said. "Not I. I know that servants are supposed to be bareheaded when with their superiors, sir!"

“Still more punning no matter what the topic of conversation is!” Lorenzo complained. “Are you going to show off the whole wealth of your wit on one occasion? Won’t you save some of your wit for later? Please, understand a plain man who is speaking plainly. Go to your fellow servants, tell them to get the table ready so that we can eat and to put the food on the table, and then we will come in to dinner.”

“The table shall be gotten ready, the food will be served in covered dishes, and as for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, do whatever your own inclinations and whims would have you do.”

Launcelot exited. Jessica had been much more amused by Launcelot’s jesting than Lorenzo had been.

“Such sagacity!” Lorenzo said, sarcastically. “Launcelot’s words suit him — he is a fool and he talks like a fool. Launcelot the fool has planted in his memory an army of good words that he can use to pun with. I know many fools who have better positions than his and wear the same kind of jester’s costume, who constantly play tricks with words and make nonsense of whatever sense the person they talk to tries to make.

“But how are you, Jessica? And, good and sweet Jessica, tell me what you think about Portia. Do you like the Lord Bassanio’s wife?”

“I like her more than I can say,” Jessica said. “The Lord Bassanio really needs to live a morally upright life because, having such a blessing in his wife, he finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth. If he does not act here on Earth to merit such a blessing, then it stands to reason that he should never get to Heaven. Why, if two gods were to play some Heavenly game and each bet an Earthly woman on the outcome, and Portia were one of those women, then the other god must wager a woman and something more in order to make the prizes fair and equal because no woman here in this poor rude world is the equal of Portia. She is better than any other woman.”

“As worthy a wife she is to Bassanio, just as worthy am I a husband to you,” Lorenzo said in a gentle, joking tone of voice.

“You need to ask me for my opinion about that,” Jessica replied, also in a gentle, joking tone of voice.

“I will, and soon,” Lorenzo said. “First, let us go in to dinner.”

“Not yet,” Jessica said, “let me praise you while I have a stomach — both an appetite and the inclination — to praise you.”

“Please, let this serve for table conversation as we eat,” Lorenzo said. “Whatever you say, I will digest your words — among other things.”

“Well, I’ll set you forth,” Jessica said. “I will set you at the table, and I will give you large servings of praise.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

The Duke and the Magnificoes — the Magnates — of Venice — entered the courtroom, and then, using a different door, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salario, and others entered the courtroom.

The Duke asked, “Is Antonio here?”

Antonio replied, “I am present, so please your grace.”

“I am sorry for you,” the Duke said to him. “You have come to answer a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch who is incapable of pity and who is void and empty of even a tiny quantity of mercy.”

Antonio replied, “I have heard that your grace has taken great pains to moderate Shylock’s rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate, firm, and resolute and since no lawful means can carry me out of the reach of his envy, I do match my patience and endurance of pain against his fury, and I am prepared to endure, with a quietness of spirit, the great cruelty and rage of his spirit.”

The Duke, “One of you, go and call the Jew into the court.”

Salario answered, “He is ready and waiting at the door; here he comes, my Lord.”

Carrying a sharp knife and a pair of scales, Shylock entered the courtroom, and the Duke said to the others present, “Make room, and let him stand before me.”

The Duke then said, “Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so, too, that you are intending to put on an act of malice and evil until the last moment, and then it is thought that you shall show your mercy and pity — a mercy and pity that are stranger and more extraordinary than is your strange and extraordinary pretense of cruelty.

“We think that although now you insist on collecting the penalty for the forfeiture of poor Antonio’s debt, which is one pound of his flesh, that you will not only not insist on collecting the pound of flesh but that you, touched with human gentleness and love, will also forgive a part of the principal that was borrowed so that it need not be paid back.

“We think that you will do these things because you will look with an eye of pity on Antonio’s losses that have recently and heavily piled on his back. His losses have been large enough to bankrupt a merchant who has had very substantial wealth. His losses have also been large enough to make merciful the stony and flinty and hard hearts of stubborn, cruel, and bloodthirsty Turks and Tartars, who have not been educated to show tender courtesy to others.

“We all expect a gentle and merciful answer befitting a gentleman from you, Jew.”

Shylock replied, “I have informed your grace about what I want, and I have sworn by our holy Sabbath to have the pound of Antonio’s flesh that is called for, according to my contract with him. If you deny me that pound of flesh, then Jewish and foreign merchants who, like me, are not citizens of Venice, will doubt whether the laws of Venice will protect their rights and

freedom. If that happens, then Venice will suffer financially. Therefore, you must enforce the legal contract that Antonio and I have made.

“You must want to ask me why I rather choose to have a pound of carrion flesh than to receive the three thousand ducats that Antonio owes me. I will not answer that except to say that it is my whim to take a pound of Antonio’s flesh — I simply feel like taking a pound of his flesh instead of three thousand ducats. Does that answer your question? Suppose that a rat troubles my house, and I am willing to pay ten thousand ducats to have it poisoned. Does that answer your question? Some men do not like seeing a roast pig with its mouth open on the banquet table. Some men become insane when they see a cat. Other men, when they hear the nasal tone of a bagpipe, hate it so much that they pee themselves. People like or dislike things according to desires that they have by nature and that affect how strongly they feel about their likes and dislikes.

“Now, as for the answer to your question, just as there is no obviously right answer to the questions of why one man hates a roast pig with an open mouth, why a second man hates a harmless and useful cat, and why a third man hates a bagpipe wrapped in cloth, but are forced involuntarily by their nature to act on their hatred although doing so offends other people, I can give you no reason for why I want a pound of Antonio’s flesh other than to say that I deeply hate and loathe Antonio so much that I prefer to take a pound of his flesh rather than the three thousand ducats he owes me. Does that answer your question?”

“This is not an answer, you unfeeling man, that will excuse the outpouring of your cruelty,” Bassanio said, although Shylock had been addressing the Duke.

“I am not obligated to please you with my answers,” Shylock said to Bassanio.

“Do all men kill the living things they do not love?” Bassanio asked.

Shylock replied, “Does any man hate a living thing that he would not kill?”

“Not every displeasure is a hate at first,” Bassanio said.

Shylock replied, “Would you allow a snake to bite you twice?”

“Please, remember that you are arguing with Shylock the Jew,” Antonio said. “You may as well go stand upon the beach and tell the ocean not to have a high tide. You may as well argue with a wolf about why the wolf made a ewe bleat for her lamb. You may as well forbid the mountain pines to wag their high tops and to make noise when the gusts of the skies blow against them. You may as well do anything that is the most difficult rather than try to soften Shylock’s Jewish heart — is anything harder than that? Therefore, I ask you to try to make no more bargains with and arguments opposing Shylock. Instead, quickly and plainly let me know the judgment of the court — the Jew will have what he wants.”

Bassanio ignored Antonio’s request and said to Shylock, “Antonio owes you three thousand ducats, but I will pay you six thousand ducats.”

Shylock replied, “If each of the six thousand ducats were divided into six parts and each part became a full ducat, I would not take them. I insist on taking a pound of Antonio’s flesh.”

The Duke asked Shylock, “How can you ever hope for mercy since you yourself show no mercy? Don’t you fear a merciless judgment being made against you?”

“What judgment shall I fear, since I am doing no wrong?” Shylock replied. “You Christians have among you many slaves whom you have purchased. You treat these slaves like you treat your asses and your dogs and your mules; you treat them abjectly and work them hard — you own them. Shall I say to you, ‘Let your slaves be free, and let them marry your children and inherit your wealth. Why should your slaves sweat as they work for you? Let your slaves’ beds be as soft as your beds and let their food be the same kind of food that you eat’? You will answer, ‘The slaves are ours to treat as we wish.’”

“I answer you the way that you will answer me: The pound of flesh that I am demanding from Antonio is dearly bought. I paid for it, it is mine, and I will have it.

“If you deny me, then your laws mean nothing! If you break the laws of Venice, then the law will have no force. I want my legal contract with Antonio to be enforced by the laws of Venice. I want justice. Tell me, shall I receive it?”

The Duke replied, “I have the power to dismiss this court unless Bellario, a learned doctor of civil law in Padua, whom I have asked to come here to judge this case, comes here today.”

Salario said, “My lord, outside this courtroom is a messenger with a letter from the doctor; the messenger has just now come from Padua.”

The Duke ordered, “Bring us the letter; tell the messenger to come and stand here in front of me.”

Bassanio said, “Be of good cheer, Antonio! What, man, have courage! Shylock the Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and everything else before you shall lose for me even one drop of blood.”

“I am a sick and contaminated wether — a castrated ram,” Antonio said. “I am most suitable for death. The weakest kind of fruit drops earliest to the ground, and so let me die. You can best employ your time, Bassanio, in staying alive and writing my epitaph.”

Nerissa, dressed like a lawyer’s young clerk, entered the courtroom, carrying a letter.

“Have you come from Padua, from Bellario?” the Duke asked.

“I have come from both, my lord,” Nerissa said. “Bellario greets your grace.”

She gave the Duke the letter.

As the Duke read the letter, Shylock began to whet — to sharpen — his knife on the leather sole of one of his shoes.

Bassanio asked him, “Why are you sharpening your knife so eagerly?”

“I am getting ready to cut off a pound of flesh from that bankrupt there,” Shylock replied.

“Not on your sole, but on your soul, harsh Jew,” Gratiano said, “are you sharpening your knife, but no metal — not even the metal of the executioner’s axe — can possess half the keenness of your sharp malice. Can no prayers penetrate your heart and persuade you to be merciful?”

“No, none,” Shylock said. “None that you are able to make.”

Gratiano said, “Be damned, you dog! It is impossible to hate you as much as you deserve to be hated. People must wonder whether justice exists when they see that you are alive. You almost make me waver in my Christian faith and believe in Pythagoras’ heretical theory of the transmigration of souls. He believed that the soul of an animal could appear in the body of a man. Your spirit is doglike; your spirit may have been that of a wolf that killed a man, was found guilty, and therefore was hung and killed. In our society, we sometimes put on trial and punish animals. From the gallows the wolf’s murderous spirit flew and while you were in the womb of your unholy and non-Christian mother, it infused itself in you. Your desires are those of wolves — your desires are bloody, starved, and ravenous.”

“Unless you can shout the seal off the legal contract that Antonio and I signed,” Shylock said, “you are hurting only your own lungs by speaking so loudly. Start using your brain, good youth, or it will be completely and permanently ruined through lack of use. I am here in this court to get justice, not to listen to you.”

Having finished reading the letter, the Duke said, “This letter from Bellario praises a young and learned doctor and recommends that he appear as judge in our court. Where is he?”

Nerissa said, “He is waiting outside, near here, to find out whether or not you will allow him to enter the courtroom.”

“He can enter here with all my heart,” the Duke said. “Some three or four of you go and give him courteous conduct to this place. Meanwhile, the court shall hear Bellario’s letter.”

Three or four attendants departed.

The Duke read out loud,

*“Your grace should know that when I received your letter to me that I was very sick, but when your messenger came with your letter, a young doctor of Rome, whose name is Balthazar, was visiting me as a friend. I informed him about the case between Shylock the Jew and Antonio the merchant. We consulted many books together. I have told Balthazar my opinion of the case. My opinion, which has been supplemented by and bettered by Balthazar’s own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough praise, comes with him, at my request, to fulfill your grace’s request for legal expertise since I am too ill to travel. Please, do not think lowly of Balthazar because of his youth, for I never knew so young a body to have so old — that is, so wise — a head. I trust that you will graciously accept his help. His performance at the trial will be so impressive and expert that it will greatly increase his reputation.”*

The Duke said, “You have heard what the learned Bellario wrote to me.”

He looked up, saw Portia, dressed like a lawyer, entering the courtroom, and said, “And here, I take it, is Balthazar, the young doctor of civil law.”

The Duke said, “Shake hands with me.”

They shook hands. The Duke asked, “Have you come from old Bellario?”

“I have, my lord.”

“You are welcome. Prepare to judge this case. Are you acquainted with the dispute that is being judged in this courtroom?”

“I am thoroughly informed about the dispute,” Portia said. “Who is the merchant here, and who is the Jew?”

“Antonio and old Shylock, both of you step forward,” the Duke said.

They did.

Portia asked, “Is your name Shylock?”

“Shylock is my name.”

Portia said to him, “This lawsuit of yours is unusual, yet the law of Venice cannot stop you from pursuing it.”

She then said to Antonio, “You are in debt to Shylock, and so he has power over you — is that right?”

“Yes, I am in debt to him, and he says that he has power over me.”

“Do you confess that you owe him money?”

“I do.”

“Then the Jew must be merciful and not take a pound of your flesh,” Portia said.

“Are you forcing me to be merciful?” Shylock said. “How do you justify that? Why should I be constrained to be merciful?”

“The quality of mercy cannot be constrained — mercy cannot be forced,” Portia said. “Mercy drops as the gentle rain drops from Heaven upon the place beneath it. Mercy blesses twice: It blesses the person who gives mercy, and it blesses the person who receives mercy.

“Mercy is mightiest in the mightiest: mercy is the most powerful quality of the most powerful people. Mercy becomes the Monarch on his throne more than his crown becomes him. The Monarch’s scepter shows the force of temporal power, the visible symbol of awe and majesty. Because of Kings’ temporal power, people dread and fear them.

“But mercy is above this temporal power; mercy is enthroned in the hearts of Kings. Mercy is an attribute of God Himself. Earthly power shows itself to be like God’s power when Earthly justice is tempered with mercy.

“Therefore, Jew, although you plead for justice, consider this: If justice were strictly enforced, none of us would ever see Heaven. None of us would ever be saved from damnation. All of us are guilty of sin. Therefore, we pray that God will show mercy to us. Remember the Lord’s Prayer: In Matthew 6:12, Jesus prayed to God, his Father, ‘*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*’ The Lord’s Prayer teaches all of us to be merciful — to engage in deeds of mercy. I have spoken all of this in hopes that you will show mercy and not insist on strict justice. But if you do insist on strict justice, this strict Venetian court of law must pronounce a sentence against Antonio, this merchant here.”

Shylock replied, “May my deeds fall upon my head. I will be responsible for what I am doing. I insist on a strict justice. I want the contract to be strictly enforced. I want a pound of Antonio’s flesh.”

“Isn’t Antonio able to pay back the money he owes to you?” Portia asked.

Bassanio said, “Yes, here in this court I have the money that Antonio owes Shylock. I have twice the amount of money that Antonio owes Shylock, and I am willing to give Shylock that amount to repay the debt owed to him. If twice the amount owed is not enough, then I will legally bind myself to pay back ten times as much money as is owed him. I will bind myself to do that with the penalty for forfeiture being my hands, my head, and my heart. If ten times the amount owed is still not sufficient, then it must be the case that evil conquers righteousness. I beg you, Balthazar, use your authority to twist the law on this occasion: To do a great right, do a little wrong, and thwart the will of this cruel Devil.”

“Twisting and misinterpreting the law must not happen,” Portia replied. “No power in Venice can alter an established and decreed law. Twisting and misinterpreting the law will set a precedent, and that precedent will result in much evil in the future. Therefore, twisting and misinterpreting the law must not happen.”

Shylock said, “This is a Daniel come to judge this case! Yes, a Daniel! Wise young judge, I honor you!”

In the very short Book of Susanna (considered part of the Apocrypha by some religious traditions; other religious traditions include it as chapter 13 of the Book of Daniel), two old men spied on a young woman named Susanna as she bathed alone in her garden. Afterward, they told her that unless she slept with them they would lie and say that she had been having sex with a young man. She refused to sleep with them, and they spread the lie. She was put on trial for promiscuity; if found guilty, she would be executed. Daniel talked to the two old men separately. Their stories were inconsistent, and Daniel was able to show that they were lying. Susanna went free, and the two old men were executed.

“Please let me see the contract,” Portia requested.

Shylock gave it to her, saying, “Here it is, most reverend doctor, here it is.”

Portia looked at Bassanio, who had offered Shylock twice the amount that he was owed. Of course, it was Portia’s money, and she was willing to give three times the amount owed — or more — to save the life of Antonio, her husband’s best friend.

She said, “Shylock, you have been offered three times the amount of money you are owed if you will stop this lawsuit and stop insisting on receiving a pound of Antonio’s flesh.”

Shylock replied, “An oath! An oath! I have made an oath to Heaven that I will have a pound of Antonio’s flesh. Shall my soul be found guilty of perjury? No, I will not allow that to happen, not even if I were to receive as payment all of Venice.”

“Truly, this contract has been breached by Antonio,” Portia said. “According to the law, Shylock may claim a pound of flesh, to be by him cut off nearest Antonio the merchant’s heart. But, Shylock, I urge you to be merciful. Take three times the amount of money that is owed to you, and let me tear up this contract.”

“You may tear it up after I have received my pound of flesh,” Shylock replied. “The debt must be paid according to the tenor of the law — according to the wording that is in the contract. It appears that you are a worthy judge. You know the law; your exposition of the law has been very sound. I charge you by the law, whereof you are a well-deserving pillar, to proceed and

make your judgment. By my soul, I swear that the tongue of no man has the power to persuade me to change my mind. I will have a pound of Antonio's flesh because he forfeited on his contract."

Antonio said, "Most heartily do I ask the court to give its judgment in this case."

"Why, then, this is the court's judgment," Portia said. "You must prepare your chest to be cut into by his knife."

Happy, Shylock said, "You are a noble judge! You are an excellent young man!"

"The intent and purpose of the law is to uphold legal contracts, including the penalties that appear in those legal contracts, including the penalty in this one," Portia said.

"That is very true," Shylock said. "You are a wise and upright judge! You are much more mature than your youthful appearance suggests!"

Portia said to Antonio, "Open your shirt and lay bare your chest."

"Yes, his chest," Shylock said. "That is what the contract says, isn't that so, noble judge? The contract includes these words: 'nearest his heart.'"

"That is true," Portia said. "Is there a set of scales here to weigh the flesh?"

"I have them ready," Shylock replied.

"Have a surgeon stand by, Shylock, at your expense," Portia requested, "to stop the bleeding from his wounds, lest he bleed to death."

"Does the contract state that?" Shylock asked, knowing that it did not.

"The contract does not state that," Portia said, "but so what? It would be good if you did that much out of charity."

Shylock glanced at a copy of the contract and said, "I do not see that the presence of a surgeon is specified in the contract."

Portia asked Antonio, "You, merchant, have you anything to say?"

"Just a little," Antonio replied. "I am fortified in spirit and well prepared. Let us shake hands, Bassanio. Fare you well! Don't grieve because I am suffering this for you because in this Fortune shows herself to be kinder than is her custom. Fortune usually allows a man to outlive his wealth, to view with hollow eyes and a wrinkled brow a wretched old age of poverty. From that lingering punishment of much misery, Fortune has cut me off; I die before I can endure it. Commend me to your honorable wife. Tell her how I, Antonio, died. Say how I respected you and regarded you as a friend; speak well of me after I die. And, when the tale is told, ask her to judge whether or not Bassanio once had a true friend. Regret only that you shall lose your friend. If you do so, I will not regret paying your debt. Indeed, if the Jew cuts me deeply enough, I will repay the debt immediately with all my heart."

Bassanio replied, "Antonio, I am married to a wife who is as dear to me as life itself, but life itself, my wife, and all the world are not by me esteemed above your life. I would lose all — yes, I would sacrifice my life, my wife, and all the world — to this Devil, to deliver you from him and so save your life."

Hiding her mouth briefly with her hand, Portia smiled and thought, *Your wife would give you little thanks for that, if she were nearby and heard you say this to your friend.*

Gratiano said, "I have a wife, whom I love, but I wish that she were dead and in Heaven, so she could entreat some Heavenly power to change the mind of this curish Jew."

Hiding her mouth briefly with her hand, Nerissa smiled and thought, *It is well that you say this behind your wife's back, otherwise your wife would make your house unquiet.*

Shylock did not smile and thought, *These husbands are Christians. I have a daughter. I wish that any of the descendants of the Jew Barrabas, the thief who was saved from execution rather than Jesus, were her husband rather than a Christian!*

Shylock said out loud, "We are wasting time with trivialities. Please, let us get on with the sentence."

Portia said, "A pound of Antonio the merchant's flesh belongs to you. The court awards it, and the law requires that it be given to you."

"Most rightful judge!" Shylock said.

"And you must cut this flesh from off his chest," Portia said. "The law allows it, and the court awards it."

"Most learned judge!" Shylock said. "This is the sentence I wanted! Come, Antonio, prepare your chest!"

"Wait a minute," Portia said. "There is something else."

She had given Shylock ample opportunity to be merciful and still make a large profit. He could have received three times the money owed him if only he had agreed not to take a pound of Antonio's flesh. Shylock had even refused to pay a surgeon to stop Antonio's bleeding and so perhaps save his life.

Now Portia gave Shylock the sentence he deserved, not the sentence he wanted: "This contract entitles you to not even one drop of blood. The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh.' Go, and take your pound of flesh, but as you cut it from Antonio's body, if you shed even one drop of Christian blood, your lands and possessions, by the laws of Venice, become the property of the government of Venice."

Gratiano now praised Portia, using Shylock's language: "You are an upright judge! Look at him, Jew, and you will see a learned judge!"

Shylock asked, "Is that the law?"

"Yes, it is," Portia said. "You yourself shall see the act in writing. You wanted strict justice, and you shall have strict justice, although you will not now want it."

Gratiano said, "This is a learned judge! Look at him, Jew! He is a learned judge!"

"I accept this offer, then," Shylock said. "Pay me three times the amount of money owed to me, and I shall let the Christian go free."

Bassanio said, "Here is the money."

“Wait!” Portia said. “The Jew shall have all justice and all strict justice. Do not be hasty here. The Jew shall have nothing but the penalty that is stated in the contract.”

Gratiano said, “Oh, Jew! Look at this upright judge, this learned judge!”

Portia said to Shylock, “Therefore prepare to cut off a pound of his flesh. Do not shed any blood, and do not cut off less or more than exactly a pound of flesh. If you cut off more or less than an exact pound, be it but only so much as a twentieth of a gram too much or too little — or even so much as makes the scales differ as much as the width of a hair — then you will be executed and all your wealth and possessions will become the property of the government of Venice.”

Gratiano exclaimed, “A second Daniel! He is a Daniel, Jew! Now, infidel, I have you on the hip like a wrestler and I am ready to throw you.”

“Jew, why are you pausing?” Portia asked. “Take your pound of flesh.”

“Give me my principal, and let me go. Return to me the amount of money that was borrowed. No interest. No more than the principal only.”

Bassanio said, “I have it ready for you; here it is.”

“No,” Portia said. “Shylock has refused the money here in the open court. He shall have strict justice according to what is stated in his contract.”

“A Daniel — still I say it, a second Daniel!” Gratiano said. “I thank you, Jew, for teaching me that word.”

“Shall I not even have my principal back?” Shylock said.

Portia replied, “You shall have nothing but the forfeiture that is described in the contract, and that to be taken by you at your peril, Jew.”

“Why, then let the Devil allow Antonio to enjoy the money,” Shylock said. “I’ll stay here no longer to argue the case.”

“Stay, Jew,” Portia said. “The law has another hold on you. It is enacted in the laws of Venice, that if it be proved against an alien — and Jews are aliens and outsiders; they are not citizens of Venice — that by direct or indirect attempts he seeks the life of any citizen, the party against whom he plots shall seize one half of his wealth and property; the other half will be seized and go into the personal treasury of the Duke of Venice. In addition, the offender’s life lies at the mercy of the Duke of Venice and no one else. I say that his law applies to you because it appears, by what has happened here in this court, that indirectly — and directly, too — you have contrived to take the life of the defendant; therefore, you have incurred the punishments that I have mentioned. And so, Shylock, get down on your knees and beg the Duke to be merciful.”

Gratiano said to Shylock, “Beg for permission to hang yourself. However, since your wealth has been forfeited to the Venetian government, you do not have enough money left to buy a rope. Therefore, you will have to be hanged at the government’s expense.”

“Shylock, so that you shall see the difference of our spirits,” the Duke said, “I pardon your life before you ask me for permission to continue to live. Half of your wealth now belongs to

Antonio; the other half goes to the government of Venice, but if you show humility I can reduce that to a fine.”

Portia said, “Yes, you can accept a fine rather than the half of the Jew’s wealth that goes to the government of Venice, but what is Antonio’s is Antonio’s.”

“No,” Shylock said. “Don’t pardon me. Take my life since you are taking everything else. You take my house when you take what props up and sustains my house; you take my life when you take away the means by which I live. I make my living through the lending of money at interest; if I have no money, I have no way of making a living.”

Portia asked, “What mercy can you render to Shylock, Antonio?”

Gratiano said, “Give him a noose for free so that he can hang himself. Don’t give him anything else, for God’s sake.”

Antonio replied to Portia, “If it pleases my lord the Duke and all the members of this court of law to levy the fine instead of taking one half of Shylock’s wealth, I am content, as long as he will let me have the other half of his wealth to invest during his life, and then to give it, upon his death, to Lorenzo, the gentleman who recently stole away with and married his daughter. I do have two conditions that Shylock must meet for these kindnesses. First, he must immediately convert and become a Christian. Second, he must sign a deed of gift here in this court, leaving all he possesses at the time of his death to his son-in-law, Lorenzo, and his daughter.”

The Duke replied, “Shylock shall do these things, or else I will recant the pardon of his life that I just pronounced here.”

“Does this satisfy you, Jew?” Portia asked. “What do you say?”

Shylock hesitated, thought, and then said, “I am satisfied.”

Portia said, “Clerk, draw up a deed of gift.”

“Please, give me permission to go from here,” Shylock requested of the Duke. “I am not well. Send the deed of gift to me after it has been drawn up, and I will sign it.”

“You may leave,” the Duke said, “but be sure to sign the deed of gift.”

Gratiano said, “You will become a Christian. In your christening, you will have two godfathers. Had I been judge, you would have had ten more. Twelve people make up a jury, and they would have found you guilty and sent you to the gallows, not to the christening font.”

His heart heavy, Shylock departed. At home, he may have realized that he was morally wrong to insist on receiving a pound of Antonio’s flesh.

The Duke said to Portia, “Sir, I ask you to come home with me and eat dinner.”

“I humbly ask your grace to pardon me,” Portia replied, “because I cannot. I must return to Padua this night, and I need to immediately set forth.”

“I am sorry that you do not have the leisure to stay here for a while,” the Duke said to her.

He added, “Antonio, reward this gentleman, for, in my opinion, you are much bound to him.”

The Duke and the Magnificoes left the courtroom.

Bassanio said to Portia, “Most worthy gentleman, because of your wisdom my friend and I have been this day relieved from paying some grievous penalties. Because of that, these three thousand ducats, which were owed to the Jew, we freely give to you for your courteous pains on our behalf.”

Antonio said, “We stand indebted to you, over and above this gift of three thousand ducats. We owe you our respect and friendship and service for evermore.”

“He is well paid who is well satisfied,” Portia said. “And I, having delivered you from grievous penalties, am well satisfied and on that account I consider myself to be well paid. My mind has so far never been interested in money. Please, know me when we meet again. I wish you well, and so I take my leave.”

Portia thought, *I certainly hope that Bassanio will recognize me when we meet again — and that he will know me in the Biblical sense.*

Bassanio said to Portia, “Dear sir, it is necessary that I try harder to thank you. Take some remembrance from us — Antonio and me — as a tribute, not as a fee. Please grant me two things. First, do not deny my request, and second, pardon me for pressing you to do this.”

“You are pressing me to accept remembrances from you two,” Portia said, “and therefore I will yield.”

To Antonio, she said, “Give me your gloves. I’ll wear them in remembrance of you.”

Antonio took off his gloves and gave them to Portia.

Portia thought, *I remember what Bassanio, my husband, said about me earlier: “Antonio, I am married to a wife who is as dear to me as life itself, but life itself, my wife, and all the world are not by me esteemed above your life. I would lose all — yes, I would sacrifice my life, my wife, and all the world — to this Devil, to deliver you from him and so save your life.” I will tease him later because of what he said just now.*

She said to Bassanio, “And, out of respect for you and your request of me, I’ll take this ring from you.”

Bassanio drew back his hand. He thought, *This is the ring that my wife gave to me. Portia told me, “I give you this ring; if you ever part from, lose, or give away this ring, let it foretell the ruin and decay of your love and be my opportunity to denounce you.” I told her, “When this ring that you have given me parts from this finger, then life will part from me. When I no longer wear this ring, then you may say boldly that I, Bassanio, am dead.”*

Portia said to him, “Do not draw back your hand; I’ll take no more than this ring. Out of respect for me, you shall not deny me this.”

Bassanio said, “This ring, good sir, it is a trifle! I will not shame myself by giving you this.”

“I will have nothing else except only this,” Portia said. “Now that I think about it, I like this ring and I really want it.”

“This ring has more value than merely monetary value,” Bassanio said. “Allow me to give you instead of it the most monetarily valuable ring in all of Venice. I will find the most monetarily

valuable ring by having announcements made in public. Allow me to give you that ring rather than this ring, please.”

Portia told him, “I see, sir, that you are liberal in making offers of gifts, but not in actually giving gifts. You taught me first to beg, and now I think that you are teaching me how a beggar should be answered. Beggars cannot be choosers; they must take what they are given.”

“Good sir, this ring was given to me by my wife, and when she put it on me, she made me vow that I should not sell it or give it away or lose it,” Bassanio said.

“That excuse helps many men keep the ‘gifts’ that they have promised to give,” Portia said, “If your wife is not a madwoman, and if she knows how well I have deserved the ring, she would not be your enemy forever just because you gave it to me. Well, may peace be with you!”

Portia and Nerissa left the courtroom.

Antonio, who owed Portia his life and who did not know the marital and emotional value of the ring, said, “My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring. Let his deserving conduct and my friendship be valued against your wife’s commandment.”

Bassanio decided to give the young doctor of law his ring. He took it off and handed it to Gratiano and said, “Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him. Give him the ring, and bring him, if you can, to Antonio’s house: Go! Hurry!”

Gratiano departed, running.

Bassanio then said to Antonio, “Come, you and I will go to your house now, and early in the morning we will both journey quickly to Belmont and see my wife, Portia. Let’s go now, Antonio.”

#### — 4.2 —

On a street outside the courtroom, Portia said to Nerissa, “Ask and find out where the Jew’s house is. Give him this deed of gift and have him sign it. We will leave tonight and be home in Belmont a day before our husbands get home. This deed of gift will be very welcome to Lorenzo.”

Gratiano came running up to them and said to Portia, “Fair sir, I am glad that I have caught up to you. My Lord Bassanio upon further consideration has sent me to give you this ring, and he invites you to eat with him at Antonio’s house.”

“I cannot eat dinner with him,” Portia said, “but I do accept this ring with great thanks. Please tell him that. Also, please show my young clerk where old Shylock’s house is.”

“I will do that,” Gratiano said.

Nerissa said to Portia, “Sir, I would like to speak with you for a moment privately.”

Nerissa thought, *In the courtroom, my husband, Gratiano, said, “I have a wife, whom I love, but I wish that she were dead and in Heaven, so she could entreat some Heavenly power to change the mind of this currish Jew.” I will tease him later because of what he said just now.*

Nerissa and Portia went a short distance from Gratiano, and Nerissa whispered, “I’ll see if I can get my husband’s ring, the one that I made him swear to keep forever.”

Portia whispered, "I am sure that you can get it from him. Our husbands will later swear to us mightily that they gave the rings away to men, but we will boldly contradict them and say that they gave the rings away to women — which will be true — and we will outswear them, too."

Portia said out loud, "Go now! Make haste. You know where you can meet me later."

Nerissa said to Gratiano, "Come, good sir, and show me the way to the Jew's house."

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

On the avenue leading to Portia's house, Lorenzo and Jessica were playfully talking together. They were competing in a game in which they talked about love matches that ended badly. Although they seemed to be lighthearted, they were worried. Jessica had stolen much wealth from Shylock, her father, but she and Lorenzo had squandered much — or all — of it. Possibly, they were thinking that they would act more responsibly if they could replay their recent actions.

Lorenzo said, "The moon shines brightly. On such a night as this, when the sweet wind gently kissed the trees and they made no noise, on such a night as this I think that Troilus mounted the Trojan walls and sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents, where Cressida, the woman he loved, lay that night."

Cressida became unfaithful to Troilus.

"On such a night as this, did Thisbe fearfully walk on the dewy grass and saw the lion's shadow before she saw the lion and ran away, dismayed," Jessica said.

Thisbe dropped her mantle — her shawl — as she fled from the lion, which tore it. Her lover, Pyramus, found the mantle, thought that the lion had devoured Thisbe, and killed himself. Thisbe found his body, and she killed herself.

"On such a night as this, Dido stood with a willow branch — a symbol of unrequited love — in her hand upon the shore of the wild sea and beckoned her lover to return to Carthage," Lorenzo said.

Aeneas had left Dido, Queen of Carthage, in order to go to Italy and become an important ancestor of the Roman people, as was his destiny. Dido cursed Aeneas' descendants and then committed suicide.

"On such a night as this, Medea gathered the enchanted herbs that made old Aeson young again," Jessica said.

Aeson was the father of Jason, whom Medea had married. Jason later was unfaithful to Medea, who murdered the children whom they had had together.

"On such a night as this, Jessica stole wealth from and stole away from her father the wealthy Jew and with a spendthrift lover ran away from Venice as far as Belmont," Lorenzo said.

"On such a night as this, young Lorenzo swore that he loved Jessica. He stole her soul with many vows of faith, not one vow of which was true," Jessica said.

"On such a night as this, pretty Jessica, like a little shrew, slandered her lover, and he forgave her," Lorenzo said.

Jessica said, "I would outdo you in mentioning nights if no one would interrupt us, but I hear a man's footsteps coming toward us."

Stephano, one of Portia's servants, walked up to them.

“Who is walking so fast in the silence of the night?” Lorenzo asked.

“A friend,” Stephano replied.

“A friend! What friend? What is your name, please, friend?” Lorenzo asked.

“Stephano is my name, and I bring you word that Portia, my mistress, will before the break of day arrive here at Belmont. She has been going to roadside shrines where by holy crosses she kneels and prays for a happy marriage.”

“Who is coming with her?” Lorenzo asked.

“No one except a holy hermit and Nerissa, her waiting-gentlewoman. Please tell me, has my master, Bassanio, returned yet?”

“He has not, nor have we received any message from him,” Lorenzo replied.

He added, “Jessica, let us go inside, please, and prepare a ceremony of welcome for Portia, the mistress of the house.”

Launcelot the fool appeared. Pretending not to find Lorenzo, for whom he was searching, he called “Sola! Sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola! Sola!”

“Wo ha, ho!” is a hunting cry. “Sola!” is both a hunting cry and an imitation of the sound of a post horn. Launcelot was hunting for Lorenzo to tell him that a post — an express messenger — had arrived with news for him.

“Who is shouting?” Lorenzo shouted.

“Sola!” Launcelot shouted. “Have you seen Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola! Sola!”

“Stop shouting,” Lorenzo ordered. “I am here.”

“Sola!” Launcelot shouted. “Where are you?”

“Here I am.”

Pretending that Lorenzo was not Lorenzo, Launcelot said, “Tell him that a post has come from my master, with his horn full of good news — a cornucopia of good news. That good news is that my master will be here before morning.”

Lorenzo said to Jessica, “Sweet soul, let’s go inside, and there we will await their coming. And yet we need not go in. My friend Stephano, tell everyone in the house, please, that your mistress is at hand. Have Portia’s musicians come outside so that they can welcome her with music.”

Stephano went inside the house.

Lorenzo said to Jessica, “How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank! Here will we sit and let the sounds of music creep into our ears. Soft stillness and the night well suit the touches of musicians’ hands on instruments of sweet harmony.

“Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of Heaven is thickly inlaid with tiles of bright gold — planets and stars. There is not the smallest orb that you see but sings in his motion like an angel. The planets and stars produce the music of the spheres and always sing like a choir to the young-

eyed angels known as the cherubim. Such harmony is in immortal souls, but while our souls are trapped in this muddy vesture of decay — this mortal human body that grossly encloses our immortal soul — we cannot hear it.”

The musicians came out of Portia’s house.

Lorenzo said to them, “Come, and wake Diana with a hymn! Diana the Moon goddess is sleeping behind clouds. With your sweetest touches on your musical instruments, wake Diana and draw her out from behind the clouds with music. And with your music, guide your mistress to her home.”

Jessica said, “I am never merry when I hear sweet music. Music puts me in a contemplative and reflective mood.”

Lorenzo replied, “The reason for that is your soul is attentive to the music. We have seen a wild and wanton herd of youthful and untrained colts racing around and making mad jumps, bellowing and neighing loudly. That is the hot nature of their excited spirit; however, if they by chance hear the sound of a trumpet, or if any other air of music touches their ears, you shall see them standing still together. Their savage eyes adopt a modest gaze because of the sweet power of music. That is the basis of truth that the poet Ovid exaggerated when he wrote that the musician Orpheus was able to make trees, stones, and floods come to him when he played.

“There is nothing so stubborn, hard, and full of rage that music, while it plays, cannot change that thing’s nature. The man who does not like music and is not moved by the concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, plots and deeds of great violence, and destruction and acts of pillage. The impulses of his mind are as cheerless and gloomy as night and his affections are as dark as Erebus, that region of darkness in the afterlife. Let no such man be trusted. Listen to the music.”

Portia and Nerissa arrived.

Portia said to Nerissa, “That light we see is burning in my hall. How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in an evil world.”

“When the Moon shone before it went behind a cloud, we did not see the candle,” Nerissa replied.

“The greater glory dims the lesser glory,” Portia said. “The representative of a King shines as brightly as the King until the King arrives, and then the representative of the King loses his glory. His glory vanishes the way that an inland brook flows into and vanishes into the ocean. Listen, I hear music!”

“The musicians of your house are playing,” Nerissa said.

“Nothing is good, I see, without the right context. I think that their music sounds much sweeter now than it does in the daytime.”

“The silence of the night makes the music sound much better, madam,” Nerissa said.

“The crow sings as sweetly as the lark, when no one is listening to their songs,” Portia said. “I think that the nightingale, which sings at night, if she should sing by day, when every goose is cackling, would be thought to be no better a singer than the wren. How many things are well

seasoned when they occur at the proper season! When they occur at exactly the right time, their flavor is so much better and they enjoy rightful praise because they are true perfection!”

The Moon was still behind the clouds, and Portia called to the musicians, “Quiet! The Moon goddess Diana is sleeping beside her loved one, Endymion, and would not be awakened.”

The music stopped, and Lorenzo said, “That is the voice, unless I am much deceived, of Portia.”

Portia said, “He knows that it is in the same way that the blind man knows the presence of the cuckoo — by the bad voice.”

“Dear lady, welcome home,” Lorenzo said.

Portia said to him, “Nerissa and I have been praying for our husbands’ welfare. We hope that our husbands will prosper all the better for our words.

“Have they returned?”

“Madam, they are not yet here,” Lorenzo replied, “but a messenger arrived not long ago to tell us that they are coming soon.”

“Go inside, Nerissa,” Portia said. “Tell my servants that they are not to mention to our husbands that we have been absent from home. Lorenzo, and you, too, Jessica, do not tell our husbands that we have been away.”

Nerissa went inside.

A distinctive trumpet call sounded to announce that Bassanio was coming.

Lorenzo said, “Your husband is near at hand. I hear his trumpet call. We are no tattletales, madam; don’t be afraid that we will let your husbands know that you have been absent.”

Portia started to talk about the weather so that her husband would not suspect that she had just been talking about him — and about keeping something secret from him.

“This night, I think, is like ill daylight. It looks a little paler. It is like a very cloudy day during which the Sun remains hidden.”

Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their servants arrived.

Bassanio, who had overheard Portia’s last comment, said to her, “If you would walk outside at night when the Sun is hidden, we would enjoy sunlight at the same time as do the people who live on the other side of the Earth.”

“Let me give light, but let me not be light,” Portia said. “A wife with light heels raises them high in the air and parts them so she can be promiscuous. Such a light wife makes a husband heavy-hearted and full of sorrow, and I never want Bassanio to feel that way because of me. But let everything be as God wishes it to be! You are welcome home, my lord.”

Gratiano went inside the house to look for his wife.

“I thank you, madam,” Bassanio replied. “Welcome my friend. This is the man — this is Antonio — to whom I am so infinitely bound.”

“You should in all senses be much bound to him,” Portia said, “because I hear that he was much bound — in the chains of a prisoner — for you.”

Antonio said, “I have been freed from those chains and amply repaid for my distress by the friendship of your husband.”

Portia replied, “Sir, you are very welcome to our house. I intend to show you that by my actions, and therefore I will not waste time with pretty words.”

Gratiano and Jessica came out from inside the house. They were talking about Jessica’s ring, the one that Gratiano had given to the clerk of the young lawyer who had served as the judge in the trial of Antonio.

Gratiano said to Jessica, “By yonder Moon, I swear that you do me wrong. Truly, I gave your ring to the lawyer’s clerk. I wish that the clerk would be castrated since you, my love, are taking the loss of your ring so much to heart.”

“A quarrel?” Portia said. “Already! You haven’t even celebrated your wedding night! What’s the matter?”

“We are talking about a hoop of gold,” Gratiano said, “a little ring that she gave me that had a motto inscribed inside that was like one of the verses that are inscribed on the handles of knives. It said, ‘*Love me, and leave me not.*’”

Nerissa said, “Why are you talking about the motto and the littleness of the ring? You swore to me, when I gave the ring to you, that you would wear it until the hour you died and that it should lie with you in your grave. Even if you did not keep the ring out of respect for me, yet because of your vehement oaths you ought to have been careful and kept it. You said that you gave my ring to a judge’s clerk! As God is my judge, the clerk you gave the ring to will never grow hair on his face!”

Gratiano said, “He will, if he lives long enough to become a man.”

Nerissa replied, “That is true — if a woman lives long enough to become a man.”

Gratiano said, “Now, I swear by my hand that I gave it to a youth, a boy, a diminutive and very clean boy, no taller than yourself, the judge’s clerk, a chattering boy who begged it as a fee. I could not in my heart deny giving it to him.”

“You are to blame,” Portia said. “I must be plain with you. You parted very lightly and easily with your wife’s first gift to you: a ring that you, with oaths, put on your finger. Therefore, the ring became riveted to your body by your oaths. I gave my love, Bassanio, a ring and made him swear never to part with it; and here he stands. I dare be sworn for him that he would not part from the ring or pluck it from his finger for all the wealth that is the world. Now, truly, Gratiano, you have unkindly given your wife a reason to grieve. If that had happened to me, I would be very angry because of it.”

Bassanio, who had also given away his ring, thought, *The best thing for me to do is to cut off my left hand and swear that I lost my hand as I fought to keep the ring.*

Gratiano was no help to him: “My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away to the young judge who begged for it and indeed deserved it, too, and then the boy, his clerk, who took some pains in

writing, begged for my ring, and neither the young judge nor his boy would accept anything other than the rings.”

“Which ring did you give to the judge, Bassanio?” Portia asked. “Not that ring, I hope, that I gave to you.”

“If a lie could help me out here, I would lie,” Bassanio replied, “but you can see that my finger does not have your ring on it. The ring is gone.”

“And truth has departed from your false heart,” Portia said. “By Heaven, I will never sleep with you until I see the ring I gave you.”

Nerissa said to Gratiano, “And I will never sleep with you until I see the ring I gave you.”

“Sweet Portia,” Bassanio said, “if you knew to whom I gave the ring, if you knew for whom I gave the ring, if you knew why I gave the ring and if you knew how unwillingly I left behind the ring, when nothing would be accepted except the ring, you would not be so displeased.”

Portia replied, using the same form of language as her husband, “If you had known the special quality of the ring, if you had known half the worthiness of the woman who gave you the ring, and if you had known how much your own honor depended on keeping the ring, you would never have parted with the ring. What man exists who is so unreasonable — if you had been willing to have defended the ring with any zeal — that he would have lacked the courtesy to allow you to keep the ring because of its marital, emotional value? Nerissa teaches me what I should believe: She believes that Gratiano gave her ring to a woman, and I believe the same thing about you and my ring. I bet my life that you gave my ring to a woman.”

“No, by my honor, Portia, and by my soul,” Bassanio said, “no woman got your ring. I gave it to a doctor of civil law who refused to accept three thousand ducats from me and instead begged for the ring, which I would not give to him. I allowed him to go away displeased although he had saved the life of my very dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? I had to send the ring to him; I was overcome by shame, and my courtesy and honor would not allow ingratitude to so besmear my name. Pardon me, good lady, for, by these blessed candles of the night — the stars — had you been there, I think you would have begged from me your ring so that you could give it to the worthy doctor.”

Bassanio was courteous. He did not mention Antonio, who had urged him to give the ring to the young doctor of civil law.

“Allow that doctor to never come near my house,” Portia said. “Since he has gotten the ring that I loved, and which you swore to keep, I will become as liberal — licentious, in fact — as you. I will not deny him anything I have — no, I will not deny the possession of my body or my husband’s bed. Know him I shall, I am sure of it. Do not sleep even one night away from home; watch me like Argus, the monster with the hundred eyes. If you do not watch me continually, if I am left alone, I swear, by my honor, which is still my own, I will have that doctor as my bedfellow.”

Nerissa said, “And I will have that doctor’s clerk as my bedfellow. Therefore, think carefully about whether you ever want to leave me alone.”

“Well, if you do take him as your bedfellow,” Gratiano said, “never let me catch him because if I do I will break his pen — and I will break his male appendage that can be compared to a

pen.”

“I am the unhappy cause of these quarrels,” Antonio said.

“Sir, do not grieve,” Portia said to him. “You are welcome nevertheless.”

“Portia, forgive me this wrong I was forced to do,” Bassanio said, “and with these my many friends as witnesses, I swear to you by your own beautiful eyes, in which I see myself — ”

Portia interrupted, “Did everyone hear that! In my eyes he doubly sees himself. In each of my eyes, he sees a reflection of his face. Swear by your double self, my two-faced husband — that is an oath that will do you credit.”

“Please hear me out,” Bassanio said. “Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear that I never more will break an oath that I have made to you.”

Antonio said, “I once did lend my body as surety for him to be able to gain wealth. This would have gone badly wrong except for the young doctor who now has the ring that you gave to your husband. I dare to lend myself again as surety. This time, I will lend my immortal soul, which is much more valuable than my mortal body. I will lend my immortal soul as surety that your lord will never again knowingly break an oath that he has made to you.”

“Then you shall be his surety,” Portia said.

She gave him her ring and said to Antonio, “Give this ring to my husband and tell him to take better care of it than he did the other ring.”

“Here, Lord Bassanio,” Antonio said. “Swear to keep this ring safe.”

“By Heaven,” Bassanio said, “this is the same ring that I gave to the doctor of civil law!”

“I got this ring from him,” Portia said. “Pardon me, Bassanio, for I swear by this ring that the doctor lay with me.”

Nerissa said, “And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano, because that same diminutive, very clean boy, the doctor’s clerk, did lie with me last night and gave me this ring.”

She handed him the ring that he had given away.

Gratiano said, “Why, this is similar to the mending of roads in the summer, when they do not need to be mended. You women have no need to seek lovers because your husbands are still young and vigorous. What, have we been made cuckolds before we have deserved it?”

“Don’t be gross,” Portia said. “You are all amazed and bewildered, but we can explain everything. Here is a letter; read it at your leisure. It comes from Padua, from Bellario. In this letter, you will learn that I, Portia, was the doctor of civil law and that Nerissa was my clerk: Lorenzo here will testify that we set forth as soon as you left and have just now returned — I have not yet entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome here, and I have better news in store for you than you expect. Unseal and read this letter; you shall find in it the news that three of your merchant ships, richly loaded, have come into harbor safely and suddenly. I will not tell you how I happen to have this letter.”

“I am astonished; I cannot speak,” Antonio said. He opened and began to read the letter.

“Were you really the doctor of civil law?” Bassanio asked. Did I really not recognize you?”

Gratiano asked Nerissa, “Were you really the clerk who is going to make me a cuckold?”

“Yes, but I can say that the clerk will never make you a cuckold unless he lives long enough to become a man.”

“Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow,” Bassanio said to Portia. “Whenever I am absent, then I give you permission to sleep with my wife.”

Having finished reading the letter, Antonio said, “Sweet lady, you saved my life and now you have given me the news that I will have the money that I need to live. In this letter, I read for certain that my ships have safely come into harbor.”

“And now, Lorenzo,” Portia said, “my clerk has some good news for you, too.”

“That is true,” Nerissa said, “and I will freely give him the good news. Here I give to you and Jessica, from the rich Jew, a special deed of gift. After his death, all that he dies possessed of, Shylock leaves to you.”

“Fair ladies, you drop manna in front of starved people,” said Lorenzo, the spendthrift — or, perhaps, former spendthrift.

“It is almost morning,” Portia said, “and yet I am sure you are not fully satisfied with our accounts of these events. You still have questions to ask Nerissa and me. Let us go inside, and there you can interrogate us on oath. And we will faithfully and truthfully answer all questions.”

“Let us do that,” Gratiano said, “and the first question that I will ask my wife, Nerissa, is whether she would rather wait until the coming night to go to bed and consummate our marriage, or go to bed now, with two hours remaining until the break of day. But if she wants to wait, throughout the coming day I will wish that it were dark so that I could go to bed and sleep with the doctor’s clerk. Well, as long as I live I’ll worry about nothing as much as keeping safe Nerissa’s ring.”

He thought, *Wedding rings are symbols. A finger goes into the ring. The finger is a phallic symbol, and the ring is a symbol of a feminine circle. I plan on taking care of Nerissa’s ring — and of her circle.*

### **Nota Bene (*The Merchant of Venice*)**

1) The merchant of Venice is Antonio; the Jew of Venice is Shylock.

2) In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Jews were often moneylenders because Christians believed that lending money at interest was a sin. Usury then meant lending money at interest; it now means lending money at an excessively high rate of interest. Christians no longer believe that lending money and charging interest is necessarily a sin. Indeed, it is an important part of modern economies.

Lending at interest may be permissible in certain instances; certainly we capitalist Americans believe that. I personally see lots of good reasons for lending at interest. Bonds raise money for investments. However, at times lending at interest is not ethical. For example, the lending could be done at excessively high rates of interest. Here I think of the check-cashing places that prey on the poor. The people who own the check-cashing places can end up in Hell.

However, although we Americans may believe in lending at interest, the Bible may prohibit it — at least in certain cases. For example, thou shalt not lend money at interest to your brother, especially if your brother is poor, although you may lend money at interest to strangers. Here are a few Bible passages about lending at interest:

*Deuteronomy 23:19: Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:*

*Exodus 22:25: If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.*

*Leviticus 25:35-37: And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.*

*Deuteronomy 23:20: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

Has Shylock violated any of these commandments?

3) We really do see a lot of prejudice in this play. Portia prefers to marry someone with a light skin, and Antonio hates Jews. Portia happily marries Bassanio, and Bassanio happily marries her, but an impartial observer could very well say that Bassanio is marrying Portia for her money. The Prince of Morocco, although he is proud, has many more accomplishments than Bassanio. However, mercy is a theme of the play. We can ask why Portia would not want to marry the Prince of Morocco. If she were to marry him, she would have to move to his home in his country. By marrying Bassanio, she can probably stay in her home in Belmont. A person with a dark skin who has status high enough to marry Portia is most likely someone who lives in a country other than her own.

4) One theme of the play is the harmful effects that prejudice can have on people. It can make someone want to cut a pound of flesh from a living person. It can make someone spit on the clothing and the beard of an old man and kick him.

5) We sympathize with Shylock because he is the victim of prejudice, but he also is guilty of prejudice. He hates Antonio in part because he is a Christian, although he has some other very good reasons for hating Antonio. We ought not to sympathize with Shylock when he wants Antonio to pay the penalty that is in the contract that Antonio signed. Being the victim of prejudice can help cause someone to be prejudiced; prejudice creates more prejudice.

6) Many Christians of the time that the play is set believed that the only way to get to Heaven was through believing in Jesus Christ and therefore Jews would be damned to Hell. Because of this belief, they would regard the conversion of a Jew to Christianity — even a forced

conversion — to be a good thing. Here is an important Bible verse for understanding this belief:

John 14:6: *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

If we were to be merciful when judging Antonio, we might think that he wants to save Shylock's soul. Of course, most people today think that a forced confession is contemptible and worthless.

Antonio does show concern for Lorenzo and Jessica's financial security. He wants to make sure that Shylock provides for them after Shylock's death; thus, he forces Shylock to sign the deed of gift.

Is it possible that Antonio is also concerned about Shylock's financial security? Near the end of the play, he wishes to take half of Shylock's wealth and invest it. No doubt that money would be invested in Antonio's trade with other countries. Does Antonio intend to give the profit made by Shylock's money to Shylock? Possibly. Shylock cannot make money by lending at interest since he will convert to Christianity, and so he has no way to make a living. Antonio may intend to make sure that Shylock has money on which to live. Certainly, at the end of the play, three of Antonio's ships, richly loaded, have returned safely to the harbor of Venice, and so Antonio now has enough money to live on. Of course, we need to remember that Antonio has called Shylock names and spit on him and kicked him. Also, of course, Shylock was prepared to cut off a pound of flesh from Antonio's living body. Antonio may have wanted half of Shylock's wealth simply because at the time Antonio desperately needed money.

## **CHAPTER VII: *The Merry Wives of Windsor***

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

#### **Male Characters**

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

MR. FENTON, a young Gentleman, in love with Anne Page.

ROBERT SHALLOW, a Country Justice.

ABRAHAM SLENDER, Nephew to Justice Shallow.

FRANK FORD: a Gentleman dwelling at Windsor.

GEORGE PAGE: a Gentleman dwelling at Windsor.

WILLIAM PAGE, a Boy, Son to Page.

SIR HUGH EVANS, a heavily accented Welsh Parson.

DOCTOR CAIUS, a heavily accented French Physician.

HOST of the Garter Inn.

BARDOLPH, PISTOL, and NYM: Followers (attendants) of Falstaff.

ROBIN, Page to Falstaff.

PETER SIMPLE, Servant to Slender.

JOHN RUGBY, Servant to Doctor Caius.

#### **Female Characters**

MRS. ALICE FORD, a merry wife.

MRS. MEG PAGE, a merry wife.

ANNE PAGE, her Daughter, in love with Fenton. Anne is sometimes called "Nan."

MISTRESS QUICKLY, Servant to Doctor Caius.

#### **Minor Characters**

Servants to Page, Ford, etc.

#### **Scene**

Windsor; and the Neighborhood. This play is set entirely in England.

#### **Nota Bene**

• The comic Welsh accent of Sir Hugh Evans has these characteristics:

1) Sir Hugh often pronounces an initial *p* instead of *b*. E.g. *py* = *by*, *putter* = *butter*.

- 2) Sir Hugh often pronounces *f* instead of *v*. E.g. *fery* = *very*.
  - 3) Sir Hugh often pronounces *t* instead of *d*. E.g. *goot* = *good*, *Got* = *God*, *worts* = *words*.
  - 4) Sir Hugh often does not pronounce an initial *w*. E.g. *'oman* = *woman*, *'orld* = *world*, *'ork* = *work*.
  - 5) Sir Hugh often misuses words; for example, he often uses a noun where an adjective ought to be used.
  - 6) Sir Hugh often makes words plural when they should be singular.
- The comic French accent of Doctor Caius has these characteristics:
    - 1) Doctor Caius often pronounces *d* or *t* instead of *th*. E.g. *dat* = *that*, *de* = *the*, *troat* = *throat*.
    - 2) Doctor Caius often pronounces *v* instead of *w*, *wh*, or *f*. E.g. *vorld* = *world*, *vat* = *what*, *vetch* = *fetch*.
    - 3) Doctor Caius often pronounces *p* instead of *b*. E.g. *Pible* = *Bible*.
    - 4) Doctor Caius often does not pronounce an initial *g*. E.g. *'od's* – *God's*.
    - 5) Doctor Caius often adds *a* to the end of a word. E.g. *Peace-a*, *speak-a*.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

In front of George Page's house in Windsor, three men were speaking: Robert Shallow, a Justice of the Peace; Abraham Slender, his nephew; and Sir Hugh Evans, a heavily accented Welsh parson. Sir Hugh was not a knight. He was entitled to use "Sir" in front of his name because he had received a university degree.

Justice Shallow said, "Sir Hugh, don't try to change my mind; I will make a Star Chamber matter of it: Even if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire."

Justice Shallow felt wronged by Sir John Falstaff and wanted to take him before the Star Chamber, a high court whose meeting place was in a chamber in the palace of Westminster. It was called the Star Chamber because the meeting room ceiling was decorated with stars. This court dealt with cases involving riotous behavior by men with titles.

Sir John Falstaff was a man with a title; he was a knight. Justice Shallow was an esquire, which is the rank immediately beneath the rank of knight.

Slender added more information about Justice Shallow's titles: "You are Robert Shallow, esquire in the county of Gloucester, justice of peace, and 'Coram.'"

By "Coram," Slender meant the Latin *quorum*, which was part of the formula for the installation of justices: *quorum vos ... unum esse volumus*, or "of whom we wish that you ... be one."

"Yes, cousin Slender," Justice Shallow said, "and 'Custalorum.'"

By "Custalorum," Justice Shallow meant the Latin *Custos Rotolorum*, which meant "Keeper of the Rolls," aka the Chief Justice of the Peace of the County.

Slender, who knew very little Latin, said, "Yes, and 'Ratolorum,' too."

He did not know that "Custalorum" and "Ratolorum" meant the same thing.

He said to Sir Hugh, "And Justice Shallow is a gentleman born, Master Parson; he writes 'Armigero' to describe himself in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation — 'Armigero.'"

By "Armigero," Slender meant *armiger*, which means "esquire" in Latin. Esquires were entitled to have a coat of arms.

"Yes, I do write myself 'esquire,'" Justice Shallow said, "and I have done that anytime these three hundred years."

He meant that he came from a long line of ancestors who were esquires.

"All his successors who have gone before him have done that, and all his ancestors who come after him will also do that," Slender said. "They may display the dozen white luces in their coat."

Slender referred to a coat of arms with a dozen white luses — the freshwater fish named pikes — on it. Often, he made mistakes; here, he had mixed up “ancestors” and “successors.”

Justice Shallow said about his family’s coat of arms, “It is an old coat.”

Sir Hugh Evans, misunderstanding their conversation, said, “The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.”

At the time, lice often infested old clothing, and at the time, lice were familiar to man. By “well, passant,” Sir Hugh meant “passing well” or “very well,” but *passant* is an Old French heraldic term meaning “walking.” Anyone listening to Sir Hugh could think that he was talking about walking fish. Lice can signify love: Lice cling to men and never willingly separate themselves from men. Fish can also signify love; a fish was a symbol of Christianity, whose followers are supposed to be identified by their love.

Justice Shallow said, “The luse is the fresh fish.”

He was letting Sir Hugh know that they were talking about freshwater fish, not about lice.

He added, “The salt fish is suitable for an old coat.”

Salted fish are preserved fish that are meant to last for a long time; old coats of arms have lasted for a long time.

Slender said to his uncle, Justice Shallow, “I may quarter, kinsman.”

By “quarter,” he meant that it was possible for him to combine two coats of arms.

Justice Shallow replied, “You may, by marrying.”

If Slender were to marry a woman from a family who had a coat of arms, he could combine the two coats of arms. The coat of arms would have four quarters, and in two quarters would appear his coat of arms while in the other two quarters would appear his wife’s coat of arms.

Sir Hugh Evans misunderstood again and said, “It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.”

He thought that they were talking about the garment of winter clothing known as a coat.

“Not at all,” Justice Shallow said.

With his heavy Welsh accent, Sir Hugh said, “Yes, py’r [by our] lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures, but that is all one.”

If a coat were torn into quarters, it would mar the coat. Some coats have four skirts, or sections: two in back, and two in front. If someone were to take a quarter of the coat, aka one skirt, only three skirts would be left in the marred coat.

Sir Hugh added, “If Sir John Falstaff has committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compromises [compromises] between you.”

Sir Hugh was a good man who wanted to make peace between Justice Shallow and Sir John Falstaff, if possible.

“The council shall hear it,” Justice Shallow said. “It is a case involving riotous behavior by a knight.”

Sir Hugh misunderstood Justice Shallow. He thought that the word “council” referred to a church council, not to the Star Chamber.

Sir Hugh said, “It is not meet [fitting that] the council hear a riot; there is no fear of Got [God] in a riot; the council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments [advisements] in that.”

He wanted Justice Shallow to think carefully about his — Sir Hugh’s — words.

“I swear on my life, if I were young again, the sword should end this disagreement,” Justice Shallow said. “Sir John and I would fight.”

“It is petter [better] that friends is the sword, and end it,” Sir Hugh said.

This was good advice from a clergyman. Let friends — such as Sir Hugh — not swords, bring about peace.

Sir Hugh added, “There is also another device in my prain [brain], which peradventure prings goot [perhaps brings good] discretions with it: There is Anne Page, who is the daughter to Mr. George Page, who is pretty virginity.”

By “goot discretions,” Sir Hugh meant “a good suggestion” — he often used the plural when he should have used the singular. Unfortunately, through misplacing words, he had made “pretty virginity” refer to George Page, not to Anne Page. Sir Hugh should have placed the related words close together.

“Anne Page?” Slender asked. “Is she the one who has brown hair, and speaks in a low, delicate voice like a woman?”

“It is that fery [very] person for all the ’orld [world], as just as you will desire,” Sir Hugh said, “Seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold and silver, is her grandsire upon his death’s-bed — may Got [God] deliver him to a joyful resurrections! — give to her when she is able to overtake seventeen years old.”

In other words, when Anne Page is seventeen years old, she will inherit a considerable amount of money from her grandfather, who is now on his deathbed.

Sir Hugh continued, “It were a goot motion [good thing to do] if we leave our pribbles and prabbles [bribbles, aka quibbles, and brabbles, aka trivial disputes], and desire a marriage between Mr. Abraham Slender and Miss Anne Page.”

“Did her grandfather leave her seven hundred pounds?” Slender, who was not in love with Anne Page, asked.

“Yes,” Sir Hugh said, “and her father is make her a petter [better] penny.”

Not only was Anne Page going to inherit much wealth from her grandfather, but her father would also give her a pretty penny.

“I know the young gentlewoman,” Slender said. “She has good gifts.”

By “good gifts,” he meant “good characteristics and virtues.”

Sir Hugh said, “Seven hundred pounds and possibilities [and possibly more money] is goot [good] gifts.”

“Well, let us go and see good Mr. Page,” Slender said. “Is Falstaff there at Mr. Page’s house?”

“Shall I tell you a lie?” Sir Hugh said. “I do despise a liar as I do despise one who is false, or as I despise one who is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there; and, I beg you to be ruled by your well-willers [well-wishers]. I will peat [beat, aka knock on] the door for Mr. Page.”

He knocked on the door and called, “Hello! Got pless [God bless] your house here!”

From inside his house, Mr. Page called, “Who’s there?”

He opened his door.

Sir Hugh said, “Here is Got’s plessing [God’s blessing], and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here is young Mr. Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale [perhaps will have something to tell you], if matters grow to your likings [if you are willing].”

Mr. Page said, “I am glad to see that all of you are well.”

He added, “I thank you for the gift of venison you sent to me, Justice Shallow.”

“Mr. Page, I am glad to see you,” Justice Shallow said. “I wish you good health. I wish that the venison I sent to you were better; it was not killed in the best way for the meat to be at its tastiest. How is good Miss Page? I thank you always with my heart — with all my heart.”

“Sir, I thank you,” Mr. Page said.

“Sir, I thank you,” Justice Shallow said. “By yea and no, I do.”

Mr. Page said, “I am glad to see you, good Mr. Slender.”

“How is your fawn-colored greyhound, sir?” Slender asked. “I heard it said that he was outrun in a race held at Cotsall.”

Cotsall was a way of referring to the Cotswold Hills in Gloucestershire.

“It was too close to call, sir,” Mr. Page said.

Slender teased him: “You won’t admit that your dog was outrun.”

“And he should not,” Justice Shallow said. “You are at fault for teasing Mr. Page.”

He added, “Mr. Page’s dog is a good dog.”

“My dog is a cur — an ordinary dog — sir,” Mr. Page said.

“Sir, he’s a good dog, and he is a fair dog,” Justice Shallow said. “Can there be anymore said? He is both good and fair.”

Justice Shallow added, “Is Sir John Falstaff here?”

“Sir, he is inside,” Mr. Page said, “and I wish I could do a good turn for the two of you.”

Sir Hugh said, "That is spoken as a Christians ought to speak."

"He has wronged me, Mr. Page," Justice Shallow said.

"Sir, he does somewhat confess it," Mr. Page replied.

"Even if it is confessed, it is still not yet redressed," Justice Shallow said. "Is not that so, Master Page? He has wronged me; indeed he has, in a word — he has, believe me. I, Robert Shallow, esquire, say that I have been wronged."

"Here comes Sir John," Mr. Page said.

Sir John Falstaff and his followers Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol exited Mr. Page's house. Bardolph's face was red from his alcoholism, Nym's favorite word was "humor," and Pistol loved extravagant language of the type he heard in action-filled plays.

Falstaff, who knew that Justice Shallow was upset at him, said, "Justice Shallow, do you plan to complain about me to the King?"

Justice Shallow laid out the charges against Falstaff: "Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broken open my lodge."

His lodge was his gamekeeper's dwelling in his park.

Falstaff asked, "Have I kissed your gamekeeper's daughter?"

"Tut, I don't care a pin about that trifling thing," Justice Shallow said. "These charges shall be answered."

He meant "answered in a court of law."

Falstaff, deliberately misunderstanding "answered" as "replied to," said, "I will answer it immediately; I have done everything that you have accused me of doing. That is now answered."

"The council shall know about this," Justice Shallow said.

"It would be better for you if it were known in counsel — that is privately," Falstaff replied. "If it is known publicly, you'll be laughed at."

"*Pauca verba*, Sir John," Sir Hugh said.

*Pauca verba* is Latin for "few words."

Sir Hugh added, "Goot worts [Good words]."

Worts are cabbage-like plants.

Pretending that Sir Hugh had meant to say "worts" instead of "words," Falstaff replied, "Good worts! Good cabbage."

He then said to Justice Shallow's nephew, "Slender, I broke your head and made it bleed. What matter have you against me?"

Falstaff meant "legal matter."

“Sir, I have matter in my head against you,” Mr. Slender said, referring to his brain matter.

He added, “And I have matter against your cony-catching rascals: Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.”

Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol were all lowlife thieves and conmen. A cony is a rabbit, and “cony” is also a word for the victim of a con.

Slender continued, “They carried me to the tavern and made me drunk, and afterward they picked my pocket.”

Drawing his sword, Bardolph called Slender a name: “You Banbury cheese!”

Banbury cheeses are made in thin rounds, and so they are a byword — an outstanding embodiment or example — for anything very thin.

Intimidated by Bardolph, Slender said, “Never mind. It does not matter.”

“What is the meaning of this, Mephostophilus?” Pistol shouted as he drew his sword.

By “Mephostophilus,” Pistol meant “Mephostophilis,” a Devil who tempted Doctor Faustus in Christopher Marlowe’s play *Doctor Faustus*.

Intimidated by Pistol, Slender said, “Never mind. It does not matter.”

“Slice, I say!” Nym shouted as he drew his sword and made slicing motions with it. “*Pauca, pauca!* Slice! That’s my humor. That’s what I think.”

*Pauca* is Latin for “few,” and Pistol probably meant *Pauca verba*, aka “Few words.” In other words, Pistol was saying, “Let’s stop talking and instead start fighting!”

Intimidated by Nym, Slender asked, “Where is Peter Simple, my manservant? Can you tell me, uncle?”

He wanted someone to protect him from Falstaff’s followers.

“Be quiet, please,” Sir Hugh said. “Now let us understand this matter. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand; that is, Master Page, *fidelicet* [*videlicet*, Latin for “namely”] Master Page; and there is myself, *fidelicet* myself; and the three [third] party is, lastly and finally, my Host of the Garter Inn.”

“We three, then, are to hear it and end it between them,” Mr. Page said. “We will hear about and judge the quarrel concerning Slender.”

“Fery goot [Very good],” Sir Hugh said. “I will make a prief [brief] of it in my notebook; and we will afterwards ’ork [work] upon the cause with as great discreetly [discretion] as we can.”

Falstaff acted as a lawyer in this mock trial. He called, “Pistol!”

“He hears with ears,” Pistol replied.

“The tevil [Devil] and his tam [dam, aka mother]!” Sir Hugh said. “What phrase is this, ‘He hears with ears’? Why, it is affectations [affected]!”

Falstaff asked, “Pistol, did you pick Mr. Slender’s pocket?”

Slender said, “Yes, by these gloves, did he, or I wish that I might never come in my own great chamber — the largest room in my house — again otherwise. He robbed me of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovel-boards that cost me two shilling and two pence apiece when I bought them from Ed Miller, by these gloves.”

A groat is a coin worth fourpence. A mill-sixpence is a sixpence that is made by a machine rather than made by hand. Because it is made by a machine, its edges are smoother and more regular than a sixpence made by hand. An Edward shovelboard is a shilling from the reign of King Edward VI; it was used as a counter in the game of shovelboard.

Falstaff asked, “Is this true, Pistol?”

Sir Hugh misunderstood Falstaff’s words. He thought that Falstaff was referring to “true Pistol,” aka “honest Pistol.”

Sir Hugh said, “No; he is false Pistol, if he is a pickpocket.”

“Ha, you mountain-foreigner!” Pistol said, referring to Sir Hugh’s Welsh ancestry — Wales is known for its mountains. “Sir John and Justice Shallow, I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.”

Pistol was saying that he wanted to fight Slender in a trial by combat. He insultingly called Slender a latten Bilbo — a brass sword. Iron swords are better than brass swords because iron is harder than brass. He was also comparing Slender’s thinness to a skinny sword.

Pistol continued, “Word of denial in thy labras here! Word of denial: froth and scum, you lie!”

By “labras,” Pistol meant “lips.” He was saying that Slender was lying through his lips, and that he, Pistol, was forcing those lying words back into Slender’s mouth. However, Pistol’s Latin was poor. *Labrum* is Latin for lip; *labra* is the plural form. Both “froth and scum” refer to beer; the “scum” is the dregs of the beer, while froth is air bubbles mixed with beer. Pistol was insulting Slender by calling him froth and scum.

Intimidated by Pistol, Slender said, “By these gloves, if Pistol did not rob me, then it was he.” He pointed at Nym.

Nym said, “Be advised, sir, and pass good humors — think carefully, and say good things about me.”

He added, “I will say ‘marry trap’ with you, if you run the nuthook’s humor on me; that is the very note of it.”

Even at the best of times, Nym’s language was difficult to understand. Possibly, he was using “trap” in its slang sense of “fraud” and was threatening to find out something bad about Slender and reveal it publicly. That is, he would marry, or join, the word “fraud” to Slender’s name so that “Slender” would become synonymous with “fraud.” A nutfork is a forked stick used to hook the branches of nut trees and pull them closer to the ground so that the nuts could be harvested. Police officers were called “nuthooks” because they would “hook” and arrest criminals.

Therefore, this is probably what Nym was saying: “If you try to get me arrested, I will dig up dirt on you and make your name synonymous with the word ‘fraud’ — I mean it.”

Intimidated by Nym, Slender said, “By this hat, then, he in the red face — Bardolph — robbed me; for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.”

Falstaff asked Bardolph, “What do you say, Scarlet and John?”

Slender had referred to Bardolph as “he in the red face” — cosmetics were regarded as a kind of mask, and Bardolph’s face, which was red because of his alcoholism, looked as if a red color had been applied with a liberal use of cosmetics. Falstaff called Bardolph “Scarlet and John” as a reference to two of Robin Hood’s companions: Will Scarlet and Little John. “Scarlet” was a reference to Bardolph’s red face, or mask, and “John” was perhaps a reference to the person wearing the “mask.” In folklore, Little John was a giant of a man, and so perhaps Bardolph has a beer belly — although not nearly as big as Falstaff’s.

“Why, sir,” Bardolph said, “for my part I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.”

Sir Hugh said, “It is his five senses, not ‘five sentences’ — what the ignorance is!”

“And being fap, aka drunk, sir,” Bardolph continued, “he was, as they say, cashiered — thrown out of the tavern — and so conclusions passed the careiers.”

A careier, aka career, in horsemanship is a short run at full speed. Bardolph was saying that things swiftly came to their conclusions. He did not say what those conclusions were; he was hoping that the “umpires” would decide that the drunken Slender had lost his money instead of being robbed of it.

If you have trouble understanding Bardolph’s words, you are not the only one. Slender actually thought that Bardolph was speaking a language other than English!

Slender said, “Yes, you spoke in Latin in the inn, too, as well as now, but it does not matter: I’ll never be drunk again as long as I live, except in the company of honest, civil, godly people, as a result of this trick. If I am ever again drunk, I’ll be drunk with those who have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.”

“So Got ’udge [God judge] me,” Sir Hugh said, “That is a virtuous mind.”

Falstaff said, “You have heard all these matters denied, gentlemen; you have heard it.”

Anne Page now arrived, carrying wine. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page followed her.

Mr. Page said, “No, daughter, carry the wine inside; we’ll drink it inside the house.”

Anne Page carried the wine back inside the house.

Slender said to himself, “Heaven! This is Miss Anne Page!”

“How are you, Mrs. Ford?” Mr. Page said.

“Mrs. Ford,” Falstaff said, “truly it is good to see you again.”

He added, “With your permission, good woman,” and kissed her politely in greeting.

Mr. Page said to his wife, “Make these gentlemen welcome.”

He said to the others, "Come, we are having a hot venison meat pie for dinner."

He wanted everyone to make peace with each other: Justice Shallow to make peace with Falstaff, and Slender to make peace with Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph. Therefore, he added, "Come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness with our wine. Let all of us be at peace with each other."

Everyone went inside the Pages' house except for Justice Shallow, Slender, and Sir Hugh Evans.

Slender said, "I wish that I had my *Book of Songs and Sonnets* here. I would rather have that than forty shillings."

Simple, Slender's manservant, arrived.

Slender said, "How are you, Simple! Where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? Do you have the *Book of Riddles* with you?"

"*Book of Riddles!*" Simple said. "Why, didn't you lend it to Alice Shortcake last Allhallowmas, a fortnight before Michaelmas?"

Allhallowmas is All Saints' Day: November 1. Michaelmas is Saint Michael's Day: September 29. Simple had made a mistake. He meant "Martlemas," not Michaelmas. Martlemas is November 11.

Justice Shallow said to Slender, "Come, let's go inside. We are waiting for you. But first let us have a word with you. Pay attention. There is, as it were, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off — indirectly — by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me?"

Slender said, "Yes, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do what is reasonable."

Slender thought he understood what tender had been made, but he did not. Justice Shallow was saying that Sir Hugh had indirectly stated that Slender was interested in marrying Anne Page; however, Slender thought that the tender referred to a reconciliation between himself and Falstaff's men: Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph.

"You don't understand me," Justice Shallow said.

"I do understand you, sir," Shallow replied.

"Give ear [Listen] to his motions [suggestions], Mr. Slender," Sir Hugh said. "I will description [describe] the matter to you, if you be capacity of it [are capable of understanding it]."

"No, I will do as my kinsman Justice Shallow says," Slender said, still thinking that they were talking about his dispute with Falstaff's men. "Please, pardon me; I will listen to him because he's a justice of peace in his country. I may be a simple man, but I know enough to listen to his advice about legal matters."

Sir Hugh said, "But that is not what we are talking about: We are not talking about legal matters. The matter we are talking about concerns your marriage."

"I see," Slender said.

“Yes,” Sir Hugh said. “We are talking about you marrying Miss Anne Page.”

“Why, if it must be so,” Slender said, “I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.”

“But can you affection [feel affection for; that is, love] the ’oman [woman]?” Sir Hugh asked. “Let us command [demand] to know that from your mouth or from your lips; for divers [several, diverse] philosophers hold that the lips is parcel [part] of the mouth. Therefore, precisely [concisely], can you carry your good will to the maiden?”

At the time, “will” could mean sexual desire; it could also mean genitals.

Justice Shallow asked, “Abraham Slender, can you love her?”

“I hope, sir,” Slender replied, “that I will do as it shall become one who would do what is reasonable.”

“Got’s lords and His ladies!” Sir Hugh said. “You must speak possitable [positively and more passionately], if you can carry her your desires towards her [if you want to convince her that you love her].”

“Yes, you must do that,” Justice Shallow said. “Will you, if she has a good dowry, marry her?”

“I will do a greater thing than that,” Slender said, “upon your request, Justice Shallow, in any reasonable thing.”

“Listen to me. Listen to me, sweet kinsman,” Justice Shallow said. “What I am doing is meant to make you happy, Slender. Can you love the maiden?”

“I will marry her, sir, at your request,” Slender replied, “but if there is no great love in the beginning, yet Heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another; I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you say, ‘Marry her,’ I will marry her; to do that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.”

Slender lacked facility with language — Bardolph may have been correct when he said that Slender had drunk himself out of his five sentences. Slender had meant to say “increase,” not “decrease”; “content,” not “contempt”; “resolved,” not “dissolved”; and “resolutely,” not “dissolutely.”

Sir Hugh said, “It is a fery discretion [very discrete, by which Sir Hugh meant “very good”] answer, except for the mistake in the ’ort [word] ‘dissolutely’: The ’ort is, according to our meaning, ‘resolutely,’ but Slender’s meaning — his content — is good.”

“Yes, I think my nephew Slender meant well,” Justice Shallow said.

“Yes, or else I wish that I might be hanged!” Slender said.

“Here comes fair — beautiful — Miss Anne,” Justice Shallow said.

He said to her, “I wish that I were young again because of you, Miss Anne!”

Anne Page replied politely, “The dinner is on the table; my father desires your company.”

Justice Shallow said, “I will go in and eat with him, beautiful Miss Anne.”

“’od’s plessed [God’s blessed] will!” Sir Hugh said. “I will not be absence [absent] at the grace.”

Justice Shallow and Sir Hugh went inside.

Anne Page asked Slender, “Will you please come in and eat, sir?”

“No, thank you,” Slender replied. “I thank you, heartily. I am very well.”

“The people inside are waiting for you, sir,” Anne Page said.

“I am not hungry, thank you,” Slender said.

He said to his manservant Simple, “Go inside. Although you are my manservant, you can wait upon my uncle, Justice Shallow.”

Simple went inside.

Slender said, “A justice of peace sometimes may be beholden to his friend for the use of a manservant. I have only three men and a boy as my servants, until my mother dies and leaves me an inheritance, but so what? It does not matter that I am living as if I were born a poor gentleman.”

“I may not go in without you,” Anne Page said. “They will not sit at the table and eat until you come.”

If Slender were intelligent, he would know that he ought to go inside immediately. He was not intelligent.

“Truly, I’ll eat nothing,” he said. “I thank you as much as though I did eat.”

“Please, sir, go inside.”

“I had rather walk here, outside, I thank you,” Slender said. “I bruised my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; we fought three bouts for a dish of stewed prunes; and, truly, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since.”

Slender had no idea how to court a woman — or how to fence. He must have stumbled and bruised his shin while fencing, and he ought to have known that “stewed prunes” was a way of referring to a prostitute — stewed prunes were served in brothels. He was giving Anne Page the impression that he had injured himself while fighting over a whore. He also should have known that the phrase “hot meat” had a secondary meaning of “prostitute.”

Dogs had been barking, and Slender asked Anne Page, “Why do your dogs bark so? Are there bears in the town?”

Bears were used in the “sport” of bearbaiting. A bear would be tied to a stake, and then dogs would be let loose to attack the bear.

“I think there are, sir,” Anne Page said. “I heard them being talked about.”

“I love the sport well, but I shall as quickly quarrel with another spectator at a bearbaiting as any man in England,” Slender said. “You would be afraid, if you were to see a bear loose, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, indeed, sir,” she replied.

“That’s meat and drink to me, now. I have seen the famous bear Sackerson loose twenty times, and I have taken him by the chain,” Slender said, “but, I promise you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it surpassed all belief, but women, indeed, cannot abide bears; they are very ill-favored — ugly — and rough things.”

Presumably, Slender was calling the bears — not the women — ill-favored.

A page — a young male servant — came from inside the house and said, “Come inside, gentle Mr. Slender, come inside; we are waiting for you.”

“I’ll eat nothing,” Slender said. “I thank you, sir.”

“By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir!” the page said. “You must accept this invitation! Come inside, come inside.”

“Please, lead the way,” Slender said to Anne Page.

“Come on, sir,” the page said.

“Miss Anne, you shall go in first,” Slender said.

“Not I, sir,” Anne Page said. “Please, go in first.”

“I’ll rather be unmannerly than troublesome,” Slender said. “You do yourself wrong, indeed!”

He went inside. Unseen by him, Anne Page followed him with her apron spread wide in her hands. She was acting as if she were driving a goose before her. The page, amused, followed her.

— 1.2 —

Sir Hugh Evans and Simple, Slender’s manservant, came out of the Pages’ house. Sir Hugh had instructions to give to Simple.

“Go your ways, and ask of the French Doctor Caius’ house which is the way,” Sir Hugh said.

He meant for Simple to ask for directions to Doctor Caius’ house, but his English was so poor that it seemed that he was asking the page to ask Doctor Caius’ house for directions.

He continued, “In Doctor Caius’ house there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of [who is] his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry [laundress], his washer, and his wringer.”

Clothing was wrung to remove excess water after being washed.

Sir Hugh was unintentionally funny when he said that Mistress Quickly was Doctor Caius’ “nurse.” A nurse is a housekeeper, which is what Mistress Quickly was, but the juxtaposition with “dry nurse” called to mind a wet nurse and the image of Doctor Caius paying Mistress Quickly to breastfeed him.

“Yes, sir,” Simple said.

“Nay, it is petter [better] yet [I have more to tell you],” Sir Hugh said. “Give her this letter; for it [she] is a ’oman that altogether’s acquaintance [a woman who is thoroughly acquainted] with

Miss Anne Page: and the letter is to desire and require [ask] her to solicit your master's desires to Miss Anne Page."

The purpose of the letter was to ask Mistress Quickly to say nice things about Slender to Anne Page in the hope that Anne Page would agree to marry him.

"Please, be gone," Sir Hugh said. "I will go back and make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come. Apples and cheese make the perfect finish to a meal."

— 1.3 —

In a room at the Garter Inn, Falstaff, the Host of the Garter Inn, and Falstaff's followers Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol were talking. Also present was Falstaff's page, who was named Robin.

"My Host of the Garter!" Falstaff said.

"What says my bully-rook?" the Host replied. "What do you want, jolly fellow? Speak scholarly and wisely."

At the time, "bully" was not an insult. It meant "fine fellow" or "good friend."

"Truly, my Host, I must turn away and fire some of my followers," Falstaff said.

The Host thought that was a good idea: "Discard them, fire them, bully Hercules; cashier them. Let them depart; let them trot, trot away."

"The bill here for my followers and me is ten pounds a week."

"You are an Emperor — Caesar, Kaiser, and Vizier," the Host said. "I will hire Bardolph; he shall draw draughts of beer, and he shall tap barrels of beer and wine. Do I speak well, bully Hector?"

"Good idea," Falstaff said. "Hire Bardolph, my good Host."

"I have decided to do that," the Host said. "Let him follow me and obey my orders."

The Host said to Bardolph, "Let me see you froth and lime."

The Host wanted to begin training Bardolph to be a bartender immediately. To froth meant to pour beer in such a way that it had a large head; that way the customer would be paying for froth as well as beer. To lime meant to put lime in bad wine to mask the bad taste. Both frothing and liming were ways to cheat customers.

The Host said to Bardolph, "I have nothing more to say. Follow me."

The Host left the room.

"Bardolph, follow him," Falstaff said. "A tapster — being a bartender — is a good trade. An old cloak will provide material for a new jacket; a withered manservant can become a fresh and new tapster. Go; *adieu*."

"It is a life that I have desired," the alcoholic Bardolph said. "This is my dream job. I will thrive."

Pistol declaimed, “Oh, base Hungarian wight! Will you the spigot wield? Oh, base and hungry beggar fellow! Will the spigot now be your weapon?”

Nym joked, “Bardolph was begotten by drunken parents, and so this is his dream job. Isn’t that a humorous conceit?”

“I am glad I am so rid of this tinderbox,” Falstaff said. “A tinderbox contains materials to start a fire, and Bardolph’s red nose is burning. His thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskillful singer — he kept not time. There is a right time to steal — a time when you won’t likely be caught. There is also a wrong time to steal — a time when you will likely be caught.”

Nym said, “The good humor is to steal at a minute’s rest — the best time to steal is to commit a theft in the shortest possible time.”

Pistol said, “The wise don’t call it stealing; they use the euphemism of ‘conveying,’ as in conveying money from someone else’s pocket to your pocket. ‘Steal’! This is what I think of that word!”

He made a rude gesture with his middle finger.

“Well, sirs,” Falstaff said, “I am almost out at heels.”

He meant that he was almost broke, but Pistol took the expression “out at heels” literally — he pretended that Falstaff had holes in the heels of his stockings and that his shoes were almost worn out.

“Why, then, let blisters ensue,” Pistol said.

“There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift,” Falstaff said. “I must use my wits to come up with a way to get money.”

“Young ravens must have food,” Pistol said. Falstaff had been paying for the rooms and meals of his followers.

“Which of you know of Mr. Ford here in this town?” Falstaff asked.

Pistol replied, “I have heard of the fellow. He is rich.”

“My honest lads,” Falstaff said, “I will tell you what I am about.”

Pistol pretended that Falstaff meant “round about” — his circumference.

He said, “Two yards, and more.”

“No quips now, Pistol!” Falstaff said. “Indeed, I am in the waist two yards round about, but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I intend to pursue Ford’s wife. I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she is always as affable as if she is carving meat for guests, she gives the leer of invitation. I can interpret the action of her familiar style, and I can translate it so that it can be easily understood. When I make the least favorable interpretation of her behavior and translate it into plain English, her behavior clearly says, ‘I am Sir John Falstaff’s.’”

By “least favorable,” Falstaff meant “least favorable” to him. That is, he thought that if you looked at Mrs. Ford’s behavior and noted what was least favorable to Falstaff, you would still

have to conclude that Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to him.

But “least favorable” could be interpreted as least favorable to Mrs. Ford. That is, if you looked at Mrs. Ford’s behavior and interpreted it in the way that made Mrs. Ford look worst, you would conclude that Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to Falstaff.

Pistol said, “He has studied her will, and he has translated her will out of honesty into English.”

Pistol’s words stated that Falstaff had studied Mrs. Ford’s will — that is, her desires — and he was honestly translating, or interpreting, her hidden desires into plain English — that is, something that could easily be understood.

According to Falstaff, Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to him. Falstaff thought that his interpretation of Mrs. Ford’s desires was correct.

Pistol’s words, however, had a secondary meaning. Pistol was also saying that Falstaff had studied Mrs. Ford’s will — that is, her desires — and he was translating, or interpreting, her desires, which were honest, aka chaste, aka faithful to her husband, as being ingle-ish toward Falstaff. Now obsolete, the phrase “to ingle” meant “to fondle or caress.” An ingle was a paramour — a lover who was married to someone else.

According to Pistol, Mrs. Ford was faithful to her husband, and Falstaff was wrong when he thought that Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to him. Pistol thought that Falstaff’s interpretation of Mrs. Ford’s desires was incorrect. So did Nym.

“The anchor is deep,” Nym said. “Will that humor pass? Does that expression make sense?”

Does the expression “the anchor is deep” make sense in this context? You decide.

An anchor that has been dropped into the sea keeps the ship from moving very far. Perhaps Nym meant that Falstaff’s plans for Mrs. Ford would not go very far.

Falstaff said, “I have heard gossip that Mrs. Ford controls her husband’s purse. Mr. Ford has a legion of angels; he has many angels — coins imprinted with a depiction of the archangel Michael.”

“As many Devils entertain; and ‘To her, boy,’ say I,” Pistol said.

He meant that Falstaff should seek the assistance of as many Devils as Mrs. Ford had angels.

“The humor rises — this conversation grows more interesting,” Nym said. “It is good. Humor me the angels — find a way to get the money and give me some of it.”

Even if Falstaff’s plot were poor, Nym would not mind benefitting from it if — against the odds — it should work.

“I have here a letter that I have written to her,” Falstaff said, “and here I have another letter that I have written to Mr. Page’s wife, who just now also eyed me thoroughly. She examined my parts with most judicious ogles and amorous glances; sometimes she shot beams of eyesight at my foot, and sometimes at my portly belly.”

“Then did the Sun on a dunghill shine,” Pistol said.

“I thank you for that humor,” Nym said to Pistol. “That was an appropriate expression for this occasion.”

Neither Nym nor Pistol objected to getting money from the Fords; neither Nym nor Pistol thought that Falstaff had much of a chance of seducing either Mrs. Ford or Mrs. Page.

“Oh, Mrs. Page did so run her amorous glances over my exterior parts with such a greedy and intent observation that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me and burn me up like light falling on me after leaving a magnifying glass!” Falstaff said. “Here’s another letter. This one is for Mrs. Page. She also controls her husband’s money; she is a rich region in rich Guiana — she is all gold and bounty.

“I will be escheator to them both; I will be their treasury officer, and I will cheat them both. They shall be exchequers to me; they will be my treasuries. They shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade with them and profit from them both.

“Go. One of you take this letter to Mrs. Page; and one of you take this letter to Mrs. Ford. We will thrive, lads; we will thrive.”

Both Nym and Pistol objected to Falstaff’s scheme. They thought that he had little or no chance of succeeding in seducing either Mrs. Ford or Mrs. Page.

Pistol said, “Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become, and by my side wear steel? Then, Lucifer take all! If I become a pander like that fellow who was the go-between of Troilus and Cressida, then I will lose honor as a soldier. No, I won’t do it! I would rather go to Hell!”

“I will run no base humor,” Nym said. “Here, take back the humor-letter: I will keep the ’havior of good reputation. I will act in such a way that I will not get a bad reputation as a pander.”

Falstaff said to Robin, his page, “Deliver these letters quickly, and sail like my pinnace — my small ship — to these golden shores. You can be the small ship that accompanies me, the big ship.”

He then said to Nym and Pistol, “Rogues, get you hence, avaunt! Vanish like hailstones, go. Trudge, plod away on the hoof; seek shelter, pack off! You are fired!

“I, Falstaff, will learn the humor of the age,” Falstaff said, “and the custom of the age is French thrift, you rogues. From now on, my household will consist of myself and my uniformed page.”

Pistol and Nym now had to fend for themselves — Falstaff would no longer pay for their room and board.

Falstaff left the room.

Pistol shouted after Falstaff, “Let vultures gripe your guts! Gourd and fullam — two kinds of loaded dice — rule, and high and low numbers beguile rich and poor men.

“I’ll have money in my wallet when you are broke, you base Phrygian Turk!”

Nym said to Pistol, “I have operations that are humors of revenge. I want to get revenge on Falstaff.”

“Will you really get revenge?” Pistol asked.

“Yes, by welkin — the sky — and her star!” Nym said.

The star is the Sun.

“Will you get revenge with wit — intelligence — or with steel swords?” Pistol asked.

“With both the humors, I will,” Nym said. “I will discuss the humor of this love with Mr. Page. I will tell him what Falstaff plans to do with his wife.”

“And I to Mr. Ford shall eke — also — unfold,” Pistol said, “how Falstaff, that varlet vile, his dove will prove, his gold will hold, and his soft couch defile. I will tell Mr. Ford what Falstaff plans to do with his wife.”

“I will do more,” Nym said. “My humor shall not cool. I will incense Page to deal with poison. I will possess him with the color of jealousy. I will make him want to attack Falstaff. This revolt of mine is dangerous — that is my true humor and that is truly the way I feel about it.”

“You are the Mars of malcontents,” Pistol said. “You are the most warlike of malcontents, and you make a dangerous enemy. I will follow you. Lead on.”

They left to find Mr. Ford and Mr. Page.

— 1.4 —

In a room of the house of the French Doctor Caius, Mistress Quickly was talking with Slender’s manservant Peter Simple. Also present was Doctor Caius’ manservant John Rugby.

Mistress Quickly did not want Doctor Caius to know that Simple was in his house. She said, “John Rugby, please go to the window, and see if you can see our master, Doctor Caius, coming. If he comes in and finds anybody in the house, truly there will be plenty of abusing of God’s patience and the King’s English.”

“I’ll go and watch for him,” Rugby said.

“Go; and we’ll have a posset — hot milk curdled with ale or wine — as a reward for the troubles we take now. We will drink a posset very soon tonight, truly, at the latter end — the embers — of a sea-coal fire.”

Doctor Caius was wealthy. He could afford to burn high-quality coal shipped in by sea.

Rugby went to the window.

Mistress Quickly said, “Rugby is an honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever any servant who shall be in a house, and, I promise you, he is no tell-tale, aka tattle-tale, nor no breed-bate, aka trouble-maker. Rugby’s worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish — perverse and headstrong — that way. But everyone has a fault, so let us allow this fault to pass.”

She added, “Peter Simple, did you say your name is?”

“Yes, for fault of a better,” Simple said.

“And Mr. Slender is your master?”

“Yes, indeed.”

“Doesn’t he wear a great round beard, like a glover’s paring-knife?”

A glover’s paring-knife was flat and round and was used for smoothing leather. Glovers worked with leather to make gloves and other items.

“No, he does not,” Simple said. “He has only a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-colored beard. His beard is the color of the beard of Cain, the first murderer, as recounted in the Bible.”

“He is a softly spirited — gentle — man, isn’t he?” Mistress Quickly asked.

“Yes, he is,” Simple said, “but he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between this and his head — he is as valiant a man as any in this region. He has fought with a warrener.”

A warrener was a gamekeeper who kept rabbits. Apparently, Slender had gotten into a fight after being caught poaching rabbits.

“Do you say! Oh, I should remember him! Doesn’t he hold up his head, like this, and strut in his gait?”

Mistress Quickly imitated him well enough that Simple knew that she was imitating Slender.

“Yes, indeed, he does those things,” Simple said.

“Well, may Heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell Master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your master: Slender. I will help him court her. Anne is a good girl, and I wish —”

Rugby said, “Here comes Doctor Caius!”

“We shall be caught and scolded!” Mistress Quickly said.

She pointed to Doctor Caius’ study and said to Simple, “Run in here, good young man. Go into this study; he — Doctor Caius — will not stay long.”

Simple went into the study and Mistress Quickly shut the door.

Mistress Quickly said loudly so that Doctor Caius would hear her, “John Rugby! Go, John, go and look for our master; I think that he must not be well because he has not come home.”

She began to sing, “And down, down, adown-a ....”

The heavily accented French Doctor Caius entered his house and said, “Vat [What] is you sing? I do not like des [these] toys [things that are foolish nonsense]. Please, go and vetch [fetch] me in [from] my study *un boitier vert* [a green box], a box, a green-a box. Do intend [you understand] vat I speak? A green-a box.”

“Yes, I’ll fetch it for you,” Mistress Quickly said.

She thought, *I am glad he did not look in the study himself; if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.*

A person who is horn-mad is a person who is as mad as a horned animal during mating season — or as mad as a husband who has just discovered that he has been cuckolded.

“*Ja foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m’en vais a la cour — la grande affaire!*” Doctor Caius said.

This meant, “In faith, it is very hot. I am going to the court — a grand affair!”

“Is this the box you want, sir?” Mistress Quickly asked.

“*Oui; mette le au mon pocket.* [Yes; put it in my pocket.] *Depeche* [Be quick], quickly. Vere [Where] is dat [that] knave Rugby?”

Mistress Quickly called, “John Rugby! John!”

Rugby said, “Here I am, sir!”

Doctor Caius said, “You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby. Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.”

A Jack is a knave or rascal; Jack, of course, is also a nickname for a person named John.

Rugby said, “The rapier is ready, sir; it is here on the porch.”

“By my trot [troth, aka faith or truth], I tarry too long,” Doctor Caius said. “’od’s me! [God’s me! = God saves me!] *Qu’ai-j’oublie?* [What have I forgotten?] Dere [There] is some simples in my study, dat [that] I vill [will] not for the varld [world] I shall leave behind.”

One meaning of “trot” is “old woman.” Simples are medicines made from one plant or herb.

Doctor Caius went into his study.

Mistress Quickly, “Ah, me, he’ll find the young man there, and he’ll be mad!”

“Oh, *diable, diable!* [Oh, Devil, Devil!] Vat [What] is in my study? Villain! *Larron!* [Thief!]”

He pulled Simple out of his study and called, “Rugby, bring me my rapier!”

“Good master, be calm and peaceful,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Wherefore shall I be calm-a and peaceful-a?”

“The young man is an honest man,” Mistress Quickly said.

“What shall de [the] honest man do in my study? Dere [There] is no honest man dat [that] shall come in my study.”

“Please, don’t be so phlegmatic. Hear the truth: He came to me on an errand from Parson Hugh.”

Mistress Quickly was misusing a word. Instead of the word “phlegmatic,” which means “unemotional and calm,” she should have used the word “choleric,” which means “angry.”

“Vell [Well],” Doctor Caius said.

“Yes, truly,” Simple said. “My master wants Mistress Quickly to —”

“Be quiet, please,” Mistress Quickly said. Doctor Caius wanted to marry Anne Page, and he would be even angrier if he learned about a rival for her.

“Peace-a your tongue,” Doctor Caius said to Mistress Quickly.

He said to Simple, “Speak-a your tale.”

“My master wants this honest gentlewoman, your maid, Mistress Quickly, to speak a good word to Miss Anne Page about my master in the way of marriage.”

“This is all he wants, indeed,” Mistress Quickly said. She added, “But I’ll never put my finger in the fire, without need.”

She was saying to Doctor Caius that she would not say good things about Slender to Anne Page, although she had told Simple that she would.

“Sir Hugh send-a you?” Doctor Caius said to Simple.

He added, “Rugby, *baille* [bring] me some paper.”

He said to Simple, “Tarry you a little-a while.”

Doctor Caius began to write a note.

Mistress Quickly whispered to Simple, “I am glad he is so quiet. If he had been thoroughly moved, you should have heard him yelling so loud and so melancholy [Mistress Quickly meant ‘choleric,’ aka angry, rather than ‘melancholy,’ which she used instead of ‘melancholic’]. But notwithstanding, man, I’ll do you and your master what good I can: and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master — I may call him my master, you see, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat [prepare food] and drink, make the beds and do everything by myself —”

Simple whispered to Mistress Quickly, “It is a great charge — burden or responsibility — to come under one body’s hand.”

Mistress Quickly whispered to Simple, “Do you know that? I can tell you that it is true. I am up early and down late; but notwithstanding — to tell you in your ear, I would have no words spoken aloud about it — my master himself is in love with Miss Anne Page, but notwithstanding that, I know Anne’s mind — that’s neither here nor there.”

Doctor Caius said to Simple, “You jack’nape [jackanapes, aka ape], give-a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar [God], it is a shallenge [challenge]. I will cut his troat [throat] in dee [the] park; and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone; it is not good that you tarry here. By gar, I will cut [off] all his two stones [testicles]; by gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog.”

Carrying Doctor Caius’ note, Simple left.

Mistress Quickly said to Doctor Caius, “Sir Hugh was simply trying to help his friend Slender.”

“It is no matter-a ver dat [for that],” Doctor Caius said. “Do not you tell-a me dat [that] I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill [will] kill de [the] Jack [rascal] priest; and I have appointed mine [the] Host of de Jarteer [Garter Inn] to measure our weapons. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.”

Doctor Caius wanted the Host of the Garter Inn to officiate at the duel of Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius. Among other things, the Host of the Garter Inn would measure their swords to make

sure that they are equal in length. If one person's sword was longer than the other person's, the person with the longer sword would have an advantage in the duel.

"Sir, the maiden — Anne Page — loves you," Mistress Quickly said, "and all shall be well. We must give folks leave to prate and gossip. Heavens!"

Doctor Caius said, "Rugby, come to the court with me."

He said to Mistress Quickly, "By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door. "

He added, "Follow my heels, Rugby."

He and Rugby walked out the door.

Mistress Quickly shouted after him, "You shall have Anne —" and then in a lower voice she said, "— an ass' head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for all that. Never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank Heaven."

Fenton arrived and called, "Is anyone at home?"

"Who's there, I wonder?" Mistress Quickly said. "Come inside the house, please."

Fenton entered the room and asked, "How are you now, good woman? How are you doing?"

"I am doing better than before because it pleases your good worship to ask," Mistress Quickly replied. "I am glad that you are courteous enough to ask me how I am doing."

"What is the news?" Fenton asked. "How is pretty Miss Anne doing?"

"Truly, sir, she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one who is your friend, I can tell you that by the way," Mistress Quickly said. "I praise Heaven for it."

"Shall I do any good if I woo her, do you think?" Fenton asked. "Won't she refuse my offer to marry her?"

"Truly, sir, all is in His hands above," Mistress Quickly replied. "But notwithstanding, Mr. Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you. Don't you have a wart above your eye?"

Fenton was wearing a hat, and so Mistress Quickly could not see if he had a wart.

"Yes, I have, but what of that?"

"Well, thereby hangs a tale," Mistress Quickly said. "Truly, Anne is a remarkably charming girl. I detest [Mistress Quickly meant 'confess'] that she is as virtuous a maiden as ever broke bread. We talked for an hour about that wart. I shall never laugh but in that maiden's company! But indeed she is given too much to allicholy [Mistress Quickly meant 'melancholy'] and musing. But when it comes to you — well, never mind."

The word "melancholy" does not seem to accurately describe Anne.

"Well, I shall see her today," Fenton said. "Wait, here's some money for you; let me have your voice speaking in my behalf. If you see her before I see her, tell her good things about me."

“Will I do that?” Mistress Quickly said. “Truly, you and I both will; and I will tell you more about what we said about the wart the next time you and I have confidence [a private conversation]; and I will tell you about Anne’s other wooers.”

“Farewell,” Fenton said. “I am in a great hurry now.”

“Farewell to you,” Mistress Quickly said.

Fenton departed, and Mistress Quickly said to herself, “Truly, he is an honest and virtuous gentleman, but Anne does not love him. I know that because I know Anne’s mind as well as another person does.”

So Mistress Quickly thought, but the person who knew whom Anne Page loved was Anne Page herself.

Mistress Quickly said, “Darn! I have forgotten something!”

She departed.

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

On a street in Windsor, Mrs. Page stood looking at Falstaff's love letter to her.

She said to herself, "Have I escaped love letters in the holiday-time of my beauty — when I was young — and am I now a subject for them? Let me see."

She read Falstaff's letter to her out loud:

*"Ask me for no reason why I love you; for although Love may use Reason for his physician, he admits him not for his counselor. Yes, Love can consult Reason, yet Love need not accept Reason's advice. You are not young, and I am young no more. In this, we have something in common. You are merry, and so am I: Ha, ha! In this, we have something else in common. You love wine, and so do I. Can you wish to have anything else in common with a man?"*

*"Let it suffice you, Mrs. Page — at the least, if the love of a soldier can suffice — that I love you. I will not say, 'Pity me'; it is not a soldier-like phrase to say: 'Pity me.' But I do say, 'Love me.' By me,*

*"Thine own true knight,*

*"By day or night,*

*"Or any kind of light,*

*"With all his might*

*"For you to fight.*

*"Signed, JOHN FALSTAFF."*

"For you to fight" was ambiguous. It could mean that Falstaff was ready to fight for Mrs. Page, or it could mean that Mrs. Page would fight with Falstaff.

She looked up from the letter and said, "What a Herod of Jewry is this! The character Herod rants and raves on the stage, and Falstaff makes as much sense in this letter as Herod does in the theater. Oh, wicked world! Falstaff is well-nigh worn to pieces with age, and he is attempting to act like a young gallant!

"Falstaff resembles the Flemish — they are potbellied drunkards! And somehow this Flemish drunkard has looked at my behavior while I was around and picked out something that he considers unweighed — imprudent. When he picked out that unweighed something, he was picking out the Devil's name! And now because of that unweighed something — whatever it was — he dares in this manner to proposition me! What should I say to him? Whenever I was around him, I was frugal with my mirth. I did nothing wrong, and Heaven forgive me for what I am now thinking! Why, I am tempted to push for a bill in the Parliament for the putting down of men! How shall I be revenged on this Falstaff? I will be revenged on him as surely as his guts are stuffed with sausages."

Mrs. Ford arrived, seeking Mrs. Page for advice.

“Mrs. Page!” she called. “Believe me, I was just going to your house.”

“And, believe me, I was coming to visit you,” Mrs. Page said. “You look very ill.”

“No, I will never believe that I look ill in the sense of being ugly,” Mrs. Ford said. The letter she had received from Falstaff had upset her, but she was still able to make jokes. “I have evidence to show the contrary.” She meant that the love letter was evidence that she was not ugly.

“Truly, you do look ill, in my opinion,” Mrs. Page said.

“Well, I do then,” Mrs. Ford said, “yet I say I could show you evidence to the contrary. Oh, Mrs. Page, give me some advice!”

“What’s the matter, woman?”

“If it were not for one trifling thing, I could come to quite a lot of ‘honor’!”

“If it is only a trifling thing, forget about it, and take the honor,” Mrs. Page replied. “What is the matter? Dispense with trifles. What is the matter?”

“If I would only be willing to go to Hell for an eternal moment or so, I could be knighted,” Mrs. Ford said.

She meant — and believed — that if she committed adultery with Falstaff, she would go to Hell eternally. Each moment would last an eternity. As for being knighted by Falstaff, she would be benighted — she would be doing night-work during the night with a knight on top of her. This was not an ‘honor’ she desired.

“What? You must be joking!” Mrs. Page said. “You say that you would be Sir Alice Ford!”

She was able to guess what had happened: Mrs. Page had received a letter similar to the letter that she had received and written by the same knight who had written her letter.

Mrs. Page said, “These knights will hack; and so you should not alter the article of your gentry.”

Knights can hack with their swords, and they can also use their “swords” to do other things — say, to a woman in bed. At the time, “hackney” was slang for a prostitute as well as a word that referred to horses. Horses and prostitutes are both ridden. Mrs. Page was telling Mrs. Ford that knights can be promiscuous and therefore she ought not to seek any change in her gentry — her social status.

“We burn daylight,” Mrs. Ford said. “We are wasting time. Here, take this letter and read it; you will perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to see distinctions such as fat and thin in the bodies of men.

“Yet Falstaff did not swear and curse. He praised women’s modesty, and he gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all manner of uncomeliness, to all unethical actions, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words. He talks like a gentleman, but when you read this letter, you will see that he does not write like one.

“The way he talks and the way he writes go together no more or better than Psalm One Hundred — a hymn of praise of God — goes together with the secular heartbreak song

‘Greensleeves’!’

These are two lyrics of ‘Greensleeves’: “Alas, my love, you do me wrong / To cast me off discourteously!” Psalm One Hundred states, in part, “For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting.”

Mrs. Ford continued, “What tempest, what storm, I wonder, threw this whale, with so many barrels of oil in his big belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I get revenge on him? I think the best way would be to fill him with hope that he could sleep with me. I could tease him until the wicked fire of his lust has melted him in his own grease. Did you ever see the like of that letter?”

“Indeed, I have,” Mrs. Page said. “Letter for letter the same, except that the name of Page and Ford differs! I can provide you great comfort in this mystery of how Falstaff conceived an ill opinion of you — and me. Here’s the twin brother of your letter. It is exactly the same as your letter except that it has my name in it.

“I am willing to let your letter receive the inheritance the way that the eldest brother inherits the property in primogeniture. I swear that my letter will inherit nothing that belongs to Falstaff.

“I would be willing to bet that he has a thousand of these letters, all written with blank spaces left where he can write different names. In addition, I am willing to bet that the letters we received are from the second edition — he has already used up all the letters printed in the first edition. I don’t doubt that he has printed so many ‘love’ letters that he needs a second edition. He does not care what he puts into the printing press or another kind of press — he wants to put us two in bed so that he can press us with his weight. I would prefer to be a giantess, and lie under Mount Pelion with the giants Otus and Ephialtes, who tried to reach Mount Olympus and make war against the gods. Their plan was to pile mountains on top of Mount Olympus; however, the Olympian gods defeated them and piled the mountains on top of Otus and Ephialtes. Our being under Falstaff’s belly in bed would be worse than being buried under mountains.

“Well, I can find twenty promiscuous turtledoves before I can find one chaste man. Turtledoves are known for being faithful to their mates, so I will never find twenty promiscuous turtledoves.”

Mrs. Ford, who had been comparing the two letters, said, “Why, your letter is the same as my letter; it has the very same handwriting and the very same words. What does he think about us that makes him send these letters to us?”

“I don’t know, but it must be bad,” Mrs. Page said. “It makes me almost ready to act contrary to my own honesty and chasteness. I am almost tempted to regard myself as someone with whom I am not acquainted. Surely, unless he knows about some evil strain in me that I myself do not know, he would never have tried to board me in this violent way. It is as if he were a pirate trying to violently board a ship.”

“‘Boarding,’ you call it?” Mrs. Ford said. “I’ll be sure to keep him above deck.”

“So will I,” Mrs. Page said. “If he ever comes under my hatches, I’ll never go to sea again.

“Let’s be revenged on him. Let’s appoint a time for a meeting with him. We will pretend that we are interested in him and we will lead him on with bait, but we will delay and delay what he wants. We will lead him on until he has pawned his horses to the Host of the Garter Inn in order to pay for his sexual pursuit of us. We will hurt him in his wallet and perhaps in other places.”

“I will be willing to act in any villainous way against Falstaff,” Mrs. Ford said, “as long as it does not sully our carefully guarded honesty and chasteness. If my husband were to see this letter, it would give him eternal grounds for his jealousy.”

“Look, your husband is coming here, and my husband, too,” Mrs. Page said. “My good husband is as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause to be jealous, and that I hope is an immeasurable distance.”

“You are the happier woman because your husband is not jealous,” Mrs. Ford said.

“Let’s make plans together against this greasy knight,” Mrs. Page said. “Come over here and let’s talk.”

They went to a shady place and talked, and Mr. Ford arrived, accompanied by Pistol, and Mr. Page arrived, accompanied by Nym. Pistol and Nym had been telling the two husbands about Falstaff’s plans to seduce their wives.

Mr. Ford said to Pistol, “Well, I hope that it is not so.”

“Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs,” Pistol replied. “Sir John is after your wife.”

A curtal dog is a dog with a docked — cut-off — tail. A curtal dog lacks something, and hope can be lacking in some affairs — sometimes, hope is not enough. Mr. Ford was hoping that his wife was faithful to him. She was, but Mr. Ford was jealous and Pistol’s words were increasing Mr. Ford’s jealousy.

“Why, sir, my wife is not young,” Mr. Ford replied.

“Falstaff woos both highly born and lowly born, both rich and poor, both young and old, one with another, Mr. Ford,” Pistol replied. “He loves the gallimaufry — he loves a stew made with every ingredient. Ford, perpend — pay attention.”

“Falstaff loves my wife!”

“Yes,” Pistol said, “with his passion burning hot. Prevent Falstaff’s seduction of her, or you will find yourself like Actaeon with Ringwood, his dog, at his heels! Actaeon earned an odious name.”

Actaeon was an ancient Greek hunter who saw the goddess Artemis bathing naked in a stream while he was hunting deer. Artemis is a militant virgin. Not pleased that Actaeon had seen her naked, she turned him into a horned stag and his own dogs chased him down and killed him. Because of the horns on Actaeon’s head, he was later associated with cuckoldry and earned the name of cuckold. Cuckolds have unfaithful wives, and depictions of cuckolds show them with horns on their head.

“What name, sir?” Mr. Ford asked.

Pistol replied, "The name of the horn, I say. Farewell. Take heed and keep your eyes open because thieves do set foot by night. Take heed, before summer comes or cuckoo-birds sing."

Cuckoo-birds lay their eggs in other birds' nests, and so their young are taken care of by other birds' parents — a cuckold can end up raising another man's child. From the cry of the cuckoo came the word "cuckold."

Pistol said, "Let's go now, Sir Corporal Nym!"

He added, "Believe what Corporal Nym told you, Mr. Page; he speaks sense."

Mr. Ford thought, *I will patiently investigate this; I will find out whether this information is true.*

Nym said to Mr. Page, "And this is true; I like not the humor of lying. Falstaff has wronged me in some humors: I should have borne the humored letter to her; but I have a sword and it shall bite upon my necessity — it shall wound if I need to fight someone. Falstaff loves your wife; there's the short and the long of it. My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch that what I have said is true: My name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife. *Adieu.* I love not the humor of bread and cheese, and there's the humor of it. *Adieu.*"

Bread and cheese were meager rations — the absolute necessities. Nym was saying that he had gotten only bread and cheese while serving Falstaff, and now he meant to search for something better.

Pistol and Nym departed.

Mr. Page, who was amused by Nym's overuse of the word "humor," said to himself, "'The humor of it,' he said! Here's a fellow who frightens English out of its wits."

A short distance away from Mr. Page, Mr. Ford said to himself, "I will seek out Falstaff."

Mr. Page said to himself about Nym, "I never heard such a drawling, affected rogue. He drawls out his speeches by using repetitious and pretentious language."

Mr. Ford said to himself, "If I find that my wife is cheating on me, so be it."

Mr. Page said to himself, "I will not believe such a liar even if the priest of the town were to tell me that he is a true and honest man."

Mr. Ford said to himself, "He was a good sensible fellow."

Mr. Page said to his wife, "How are you, Meg?"

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford walked toward their husbands.

"Where are you going, George?" Mrs. Page asked her husband. "I need to know whether you will be home for the noon meal."

Mrs. Ford asked her husband, "How are you, sweet Frank! Why are you melancholy?"

"I melancholy!" Mr. Ford said. He lied, "I am not melancholy! Go home."

"Truly, you have some ideas in your head that make you melancholy," Mrs. Ford replied.

She asked, "Will you go with me, Mrs. Page?"

“Yes, I will,” Mrs. Page replied.

Mrs. Page said to her husband, “Be sure to come to dinner, George.”

She then whispered to Mrs. Ford, “Look who is coming yonder: Mistress Quickly. She shall be our messenger to this paltry knight: Falstaff.”

Mrs. Ford whispered back, “Believe me, I was thinking about her. She will do the job.”

Mrs. Page asked Mistress Quickly, “Have you come to see my daughter, Anne?”

“Yes, I have,” Mistress Quickly replied. “How is she?”

“Come with us and see,” Mrs. Page said. “We want to talk with you for an hour.”

Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, and Mistress Quickly departed.

“How are you doing, Mr. Ford?” Mr. Page asked.

“You heard what this knave told me, didn’t you?”

“Yes, and you heard what the other knave told me?”

“Do you think they were telling the truth?” Mr. Ford asked.

“Hang them both!” Mr. Page said. “They are low-lives. I do not think that Falstaff the knight would do this. These men who are accusing him of trying to seduce our wives are two of his discarded men; they are rogues now that they do not have jobs.”

“Were they his men?” Mr. Ford asked.

“Yes, they were.”

“I don’t like what I heard any better for that. Is Falstaff staying at the Garter Inn?”

“Yes, he is,” Mr. Page said. “If he really does intend this voyage of seduction towards my wife, I will turn her loose on him; and if he gets anything more from her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.”

“I do not mistrust my wife,” Mr. Ford said, “but I would be loath to allow her and Falstaff to be together. A man may be too confident. I would have nothing — and certainly not horns! — lie on my head: I cannot be as satisfied as you are.”

The Host of the Garter Inn came walking toward them.

Mr. Page said, “Here comes the ranting Host of the Garter Inn. He has either liquor in his brain or money in his pocket when he looks so merry.”

He said, “How are you, Host!”

“How are you, bully-rook!” the Host said. “You are a gentleman.”

He called, “*Cavaleiro*-Justice, I say!”

The Host was bringing news of a duel, so he used the word *cavaleiro* to refer to Justice Shallow. *Cavaleiro* is a Spanish word referring to a knight on horseback or a courtly gentleman.

Justice Shallow, who had been walking behind the Host, walked up to the group of men and said, "I am coming, Host, I am coming."

He added, "Good day and twenty, good Mr. Page! Twenty-one good-days to you! Mr. Page, will you go with us? We have an entertainment at hand."

The Host said, "Tell him, *cavaleiro*-Justice; tell him, bully-rook."

Justice Shallow said to Mr. Page, "Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor."

Mr. Ford said, "Good Host of the Garter, may I speak to you?"

He and the Host went a short distance from the other men, and the Host asked, "What do you have to say to me, my bully-rook?"

Justice Shallow said to Mr. Page, "Will you go with us to watch the entertainment? My merry Host has had the measuring of their weapons; and, I think, he has sent them to different places so that they will not meet and fight each other. Believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Listen, I will tell you what our entertainment shall be."

They talked together.

The Host asked, "Have you any suit against the knight Falstaff, my guest-*cavaleire*?"

"None, I say," Mr. Ford said, "but I'll give you a pottle — a half-gallon of mulled sack sweetened with burnt sugar if you give me access to him and tell him that my name is Brook; this is only for a jest."

Brook was a good name for Mr. Ford to choose; a brook is a small stream that is easily forded (crossed without a bridge).

"Let's shake hands," the Host said.

They shook hands.

The Host then said, "You shall have egress and regress; these are legal terms meaning the freedom to come and to go — did I use the right terms? And your name shall be Brook. Falstaff is a merry knight."

The Host then asked, "Will you go, gentlemen?"

Justice Shallow said, "I will go with you, Host."

Mr. Page said, "I have heard that the Frenchman has good skill with his rapier."

Justice Shallow said, "Tut, sir, I could have told you more about that. In these times fencers stand on distance, passes, stoccadoes, and I know not what. They pay attention to fancy stuff such as the space between fencers, lunges at each other, and thrusts at each other, but what is really important is in the heart, Mr. Page — that is what is important. In my day, back when I was young, I would have made all four of you stout-hearted fellows skip away like rats."

"Here, boys, here, here!" the Host said. "Shall we go?"

“I will go with you,” Mr. Page said. “I would rather hear them scold each other than fight each other.”

The Host, Justice Shallow, and Mr. Page departed.

Mr. Ford said to himself, “Although Page is so steadfastly and foolishly confident despite his wife’s frailty, yet I cannot put off my suspicion so easily. Earlier, my wife was in Falstaff’s company at Mr. Page’s house; and what they did there, I don’t know. Well, I will look further into this matter, and I have a disguise that I can use to talk to Falstaff and find out what is going on. If I find out that my wife is honest and faithful to me, I have not wasted my time. And if I find out that my wife is not honest and faithful to me, I have not wasted my time.”

— 2.2 —

Falstaff and Pistol talked together in a room at the Garter Inn.

“I will not lend you a penny,” Falstaff said.

“Why, then the world’s my oyster, which I with sword will open,” Pistol said. “I will have to make my living with my sword.”

“Not a penny,” Falstaff said. “I have allowed you, sir, to use your companionship with me to borrow money. I have begged my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow Nym. If I had not, you two would have looking through prison bars, like two twin baboons. I am damned in Hell for swearing to gentlemen who are my friends that you two are good soldiers and brave fellows; and when Miss Bridget lost the valuable handle of her fan, I swore upon my honor that you did not have it.”

“Didn’t you get your fair share of the profit from the theft?” Pistol asked. “Didn’t you get fifteen pence?”

“Use your reason, you rogue, use your reason,” Falstaff replied. “Do you think that I would endanger my soul gratis — for free? Because I lied for you, my soul is in danger of spending eternity in Hell. In a word, hang no more around me — I am no gibbet for you. Go. A short knife and a throng of people is what you need! Be a cutpurse and a pickpocket! Cut the strings of a person’s purse and put their money in your pocket! Go to your manor of Pickt-hatch, an unsavory part of London! Go.

“You told me that you will not bear a letter for me, you rogue! You told me that you insist upon your honor! Why, you unconfined baseness — you boundless lowness — it is as much as I can do to keep the reputation of my own honor unstained.

“I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand so that it is out of my way and able to be ignored and hiding my honor in my necessity, am happy to shuffle, aka cheat; to hedge, aka deceive; and to lurch, aka dissemble; and yet you, you rogue, will hide your rags, your cat-a-mountain — wild — looks, your red-lattice, aka alehouse, speech and phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honor! You will not do it, you tell me!”

“I do relent,” Pistol said. “I admit that you are right and I was wrong. What more do you want from a man?”

Falstaff’s page, Robin, entered the room and said to Falstaff, “Sir, here is a woman who wants to speak with you.”

“Let her in,” Falstaff replied.

Mistress Quickly entered the room and said, “I wish you good morning.”

Falstaff replied, “Good morning, good wife.”

“That is not so, if it please your worship,” Mistress Quickly said.

Falstaff knew that she was saying that she was not a wife, so he said, “Good maiden, then.”

A maiden is an unmarried woman — a virgin.

“Yes, I swear that I am a maiden,” Mistress Quickly said, “just as my mother was, the first hour I was born.”

Mistress Quickly’s speech frequently was mixed up. With the exception of Mother Mary, aka the Virgin Mary, a biological mother cannot be a virgin. Here, she was conflating two expressions: “a maiden as good as her mother” and “as innocent as a new-born babe.”

“I do believe the swearer.”

Falstaff was saying that he believed that Mistress Quickly was not a virgin.

He asked, “What do you want with me?”

“Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?”

Again, Mistress Quickly’s speech was mixed up. “To vouchsafe” means to grant, but she was not granting Falstaff a few words of conversation. She was requesting that he talk with her.

“You may speak two thousand words, fair woman,” Falstaff said, “and I will vouchsafe you the hearing.”

Falstaff knew the correct meaning of “vouchsafe.”

“There is one Mrs. Ford, sir,” Mistress Quickly said.

Worried that Pistol and Robin would overhear the conversation, she requested, “Please, come a little closer to me,” and then she continued, “I myself dwell with master Doctor Caius —”

Still worried about Pistol and Robin overhearing the conversation, she hesitated, and Falstaff said, “Well, go on. Mrs. Ford, you say—”

“Yes,” Mistress Quickly said. “Please, come a little closer to me.”

“I promise you,” Falstaff said, “that nobody hears us except people who are loyal to me.”

“Are they?” Mistress Quickly asked. “May God bless them and make them His servants!”

“Well, what about Mrs. Ford?”

“Why, sir, she’s a good creature. Lord! Lord! Your worship is a wanton — you are filled with lust! Well, may Heaven forgive you and all of us, I pray!”

“Come, what have you to tell me about Mrs. Ford?”

“Well, this is the short and the long of it,” Mistress Quickly said. “You have brought her into such a canaries [Mistress Quickly meant ‘quandary’] as is wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court was staying at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary [quandary]. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, all perfumed with musk, and so rushling [Mistress Quickly meant ‘rustling’], I promise you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant [Mistress Quickly meant ‘eloquent and elegant’] terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman’s heart; and, I promise you, they could never get an eye-wink from her. I myself had twenty angels — coins — given to me as a bribe this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, except those I get by way of honesty, and, I promise you, they could never get her to so much as sip on a cup of wine with the proudest of them all: and yet there has been Earls, nay, which is more, there has been pensioners; but, I promise you, all is one with her.”

Mistress Quickly had said that pensioners were better than high-ranking Earls, something few, if any, people would agree with. Pensioners were old knights who received a pension, in return for which they attended chapel twice daily and prayed for the King.

Falstaff was an old knight to whom King Henry V had granted — or would grant — a pension.

Falstaff asked, “But what message is Mrs. Ford sending to me? Be brief, my good she-Mercury. Be brief, my good she-messenger.”

Mercury is the main male messenger of the gods.

“She has received your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify [she wants you to know] that her husband will be absence [absent] from his house between ten and eleven.”

“Ten and eleven?”

“Yes, truly,” Mistress Quickly said, and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you know about.”

One plausible reason for Falstaff to visit the Fords’ home would be to see a noteworthy object such as a painting.

Mistress Quickly continued, “Mr. Ford, her husband, will be away from home then. Alas! The sweet woman leads an ill life with him. Mr. Ford is a very jealousy [jealous] man: She leads a very frampold, aka disagreeable, life with him, good heart.”

“Between ten and eleven,” Falstaff said. “Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her — I will show up at that time.”

“Why, you say well,” Mistress Quickly said. “But I have another messenger to [message for] your worship. Mrs. Page has sent her hearty commendations to you, too, and let me tell you in your ear, she’s as fartuous [Mistress Quickly meant ‘virtuous’] a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, who will not miss neither morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoever be the other civil modest wife here, and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom away from home; but she hopes that there will come a time that he is absent. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man. I truly think you have magical charms, in truth.”

These words by Mistress Quickly were ambiguous: “I never knew a woman so dote upon a man.” Was Mrs. Page doting upon Falstaff — or her husband?

“Not I, I assure you,” Falstaff said. “Setting the attractions of my good qualities — and looks — aside, I have no other charms.”

“May God bless your heart for it!” Mistress Quickly said.

“But please tell me this,” Falstaff said. “Has Ford’s wife and Page’s wife acquainted each other with how they love me?”

“That would be a jest indeed!” Mistress Quickly said. “They have not so little grace, I hope. That is a trick indeed! But Mrs. Page desires you to send to her your little page, of all loves. Her husband has a marvelous infection [Mistress Quickly meant ‘affection’] for the little page; and truly Mr. Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does: She does what she wants, says what she wants, buys what she wants with ready money, goes to bed when she wants, and rises when she wants — all is as she wants it to be, and truly she deserves it; because if there is a kind woman in Windsor, she is the one. You must send her your page; you must.”

“Why, I will,” Falstaff said.

“Be sure to do so,” Mistress Quickly said. “Your page, look you, may come and go between you and Mrs. Page, and in any case have a password and other secret words so that you may know one another’s mind, and the boy never needs to understand anything because it is not good that children should know any wickedness. Old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.”

“Fare you well,” Falstaff said. “Commend me to both Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. Here’s some money for you, but it is not enough — I am still in your debt.”

He said to Robin, his page, “Boy, go with this woman.”

Mistress Quickly and Robin departed.

Falstaff said, “This news makes me distracted!”

Pistol said to himself about Mistress Quickly, “This punk, aka bawd or prostitute, is one of Cupid’s carriers: She carries messages between people who want to be lovers. Clap on more sails, Pistol; pursue her; put your protective covering on, and fire at her. She will be my prize, or may the ocean overwhelm and drown us both!”

Pistol exited and went after Mistress Quickly.

Falstaff said to himself, referring to himself as Jack, “What do you think, old Jack? Continue on the path you are on. I’ll make more of your old body than I have done. Will they — Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page — yet look after you? Will you, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? I have spent so much money on food and drink to maintain you; now let Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page provide money to maintain you — it is time that you brought me a profit. Good body, I thank you. Let anyone say that what I have done is grossly done; as long as it is in fact done, I don’t care how it is done.”

Bardolph, who was now working as a tapster at the Garter Inn, entered the room while carrying a cup of wine and said to Falstaff, “Sir John, there’s a Master Brook below who would like to speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and he has sent your worship a morning’s pick-me-up of wine.”

“You said that Brook is his name?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Bring him here.”

Bardolph gave Falstaff the cup of wine and then departed.

Falstaff said to himself, “Such Brooks are welcome to me as long as they overflow with such liquor. Ha! Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, have I gotten you? Charge!”

Bardolph entered the room, leading Mr. Ford, who had disguised himself with a beard and who was carrying a bag of money. Falstaff had never seen Mr. Ford before, but Mr. Ford thought that later Falstaff might see him on a street and be introduced to him.

The disguised Mr. Ford said, “Bless you, sir!”

“And you, sir!” Falstaff replied, “Do you want to speak with me?”

“I make bold to press with so little preparation — advance warning — upon you.”

“You’re welcome here. What do you want?” Falstaff replied.

He said to Bardolph, “Leave us alone, drawer.”

Bardolph exited.

Mr. Ford said, “Sir, I am a gentleman who has spent much money; my name is Brook.”

“Good Mr. Brook, I hope to know you better.”

“Good Sir John, I sue for your acquaintanceship. I do not want to put a load or any expense on you. I want you to know that I think myself more able to be a lender than you are. Knowing that to be true has somewhat emboldened me to this unseasonable intrusion; for they say, if money goes before, all ways do lie open.”

“Money is a good soldier, sir, and it gets things done.”

“That is true,” Mr. Ford said, “and I have a bag of money here that burdens me. If you will help to bear it, Sir John, take half of it, or all of it. That will ease my burden of carrying it.”

“Sir, I do not know what I have done to deserve to be your porter,” Falstaff replied.

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

“Speak, good Mr. Brook,” Falstaff said. “I shall be glad to be your servant and listen to you.”

“Sir, I hear you are a scholar — I will be brief with you — and you have been a man long known to me, although I had never as good an opportunity as I wanted to make myself acquainted with you. I shall reveal a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open my own imperfection. But, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them

unfolded, turn your other eye upon the list of your own imperfections so that I may get by with a mild reproof, since you yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender.”

“Very well, sir,” Falstaff said. “Proceed.”

“There is a gentlewoman in this town; her husband’s name is Ford.”

“Yes, that is true, sir.”

“I have long loved her, and, I tell you sincerely, I have given her much; I have followed her with a dotting observance; I have sought opportunities to meet her; I have taken advantage of every slight occasion that could even give me a glimpse of her; and I have not only bought many presents to give her, but also I have given much to many people in order to know what she would like to be given. In brief, I have pursued her as love has pursued me, which has been on the wing of all occasions.

“But whatever I have merited, either in my mind or through the use of my money and resources, I know that I have received no reward, unless experience is a jewel that I have purchased for an infinite amount, and that has taught me to say this: ‘Love like a shadow flees when substance love pursues; pursuing that which flees, and flying what pursues.’ In other words, ‘Love, like a shadow, flees one pursuing and pursues one fleeing.’”

“Have you received any promise of satisfaction at her hands?” Falstaff asked.

“No. None. Never,” Mr. Ford replied.

“Have you importuned her to such a purpose? Have you asked her for what you want?”

“Never.”

“Of what quality is your love, then?”

“It is like a beautiful house that was built on another man’s ground; I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it,” Mr. Ford said. “A house built on another man’s ground belongs to the man who owns the land, not to the man who built the house.”

“Why are you telling me all this?” Falstaff asked.

“When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say that although Mrs. Ford appears to me to be honest and faithful to her husband, yet in other places she displays her mirth so much and so openly that malicious gossip is said about her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: You are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of admittance into the company of the great, entitled to respect in your place and person, and universally approved of for your many war-like, court-like, and learned accomplishments.”

“Oh, sir!” Falstaff said.

“Believe it, for you know it to be true,” Mr. Ford said.

He gestured to the bag of money and said, “There is money; spend it, spend it; spend more; spend all I have. I ask only that you give me some of your time in exchange for the money. Give me as much time as it takes to lay an amiable siege to the honesty, aka virtue, of Mr. Ford’s wife. Use your art of wooing and persuade her to consent to sleep with you. If any man can do that, you can as quickly as any other man.”

“Would it apply well to the vehemence of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? I think that you prescribe to yourself very preposterously,” Falstaff said. “Does it make sense for you to pay me to sleep with the woman whom you want to sleep with? Isn’t that preposterous?”

“Oh, understand my meaning,” Mr. Ford said. “She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself: She is too bright to be looked at. She claims to be so virtuous that I cannot approach her with my proposition.

“Now, if I could come to her with any evidence of her lack of virtue in my hand, my desires would have evidence and arguments to commend themselves. I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and her thousand other defenses, which now are very strongly embattled against me. She could no longer use her claims of virtue against me.

“What do you say to my proposition, Sir John?”

“Mr. Brook,” Falstaff replied, “first, I will make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you wish, enjoy Ford’s wife in bed.”

“Oh, good sir!”

“I say you shall.”

“You will not lack for money, Sir John; you will not lack for money.”

“You will get Mrs. Ford, Mr. Brook,” Falstaff said. “You will get her. You will not lack her.

“I shall be with her soon, I may tell you, by her own arrangement. Just before you came in to me, her assistant or go-between parted from me. I say that I shall be with Mrs. Ford between ten and eleven in the morning, for at that time the jealous rascally knave who is her husband will be away from home. Come to me later that night and you shall know how I succeed.”

“I am blessed to know you,” the disguised Mr. Ford said.

He added, “Do you know Mr. Ford, sir?”

“Hang him, that poor cuckoldly knave! I do not know him, yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous cuckoldly knave has masses of money; because of Mr. Ford’s money, his wife seems to me especially good-looking. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue’s coffer; and there’s my harvest-home. Through his wife, I will get access to his money, and that will be the harvest of my seeding.”

“I wish that you knew Mr. Ford, sir, so that you could avoid him if you saw him,” the disguised Mr. Ford said.

“Hang him, the mechanical salt-butter rogue!” Falstaff said.

He had insulted Mr. Ford twice in that sentence. One, he called Mr. Ford a mechanical — a workingman. In their culture, a person who did not need to work to support himself had a higher social status than a person who had to work. Two, a person who ate inexpensive salted butter imported from Flanders had a lower social status than someone who could afford to eat English butter.

Falstaff continued, “I will flare at him and scare him out of his wits. I will awe him with my cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor over the cuckold’s horns. It shall be over him, ready to fall, and it will be a sign of misfortune to come. Mr. Brook, you should know that I will predominate over the peasant, and you will sleep with his wife. Come to me at night after I have visited her in the morning. Mr. Ford is a knave, and I will add other disgraceful titles to that title. You, Mr. Brook, shall know that Mr. Ford is a knave and a cuckold. Come to me at night after I have visited her.”

Falstaff took the money and departed.

Mr. Ford said to himself, “What a damned Epicurean —devoted to pleasure — rascal this Falstaff is! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says my jealousy is unjustified? My wife sent a message to him; the hour for their meeting has been set; the match is made between them. Would any man have thought this? See the Hell of having a false — an unfaithful — woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but I will also be called abominable names by the man who does me this wrong. Abominable names! Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well — these are the names of Devils, the names of fiends of Hell. But what about the name of Cuckold! Or the name of Wittol — which is given to a contented cuckold! Cuckold! The Devil himself has not as bad a name as Cuckold! Page is an ass, an over-confident ass: He trusts his wife, and he is not jealous. I would rather trust a Flemish man with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my bottle of whiskey, or a thief with walking my gentle gelding, than I would trust my wife with herself. If I were to trust her, then she would plot, then she would ruminate, then she would devise — and what wives think in their hearts they can do, they will break their hearts if they have to, but they will do it.

“May God be praised for my jealousy! Eleven o’clock is the hour that they will meet. I will prevent their adultery, get evidence of my wife planning to commit adultery, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will start getting ready to do this; it is better to be three hours too soon than a minute too late.

“Damn! Damn! Damn! Cuckold! Cuckold! Cuckold!”

— 2.3 —

The following morning, the French Doctor Caius and his servant John Rugby stood in a field near Windsor. Duels were illegal, and so they were often fought in the morning. If they were fought later, they would attract more attention.

Doctor Caius called, “Jack Rugby!”

Rugby replied, “Sir?”

“Vat is de clock, Jack? [What is the time, Jack?]”

“It is past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet you and fight you in a duel.”

“By gar [God], he has save his soul, dat [that] he is no come; he has pray his Pible [Bible] well, dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is [would be] dead already, if he be [had] come.”

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

“By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him. [By God, the herring is not as dead as I will kill him.] Take out your rapier, Jack; I vill [will] tell [Doctor Caius meant ‘show’] you how I vill kill him.”

“Alas, sir, I cannot fence.”

“Villainy [Villain], take out your rapier.”

“Stop! Here comes company.”

The Host of the Garter Inn, Justice Shallow, Slender, and Mr. Page arrived.

The Host said to Doctor Caius, “Bless you, bully doctor!”

Justice Shallow said, “May God save you, Doctor Caius!”

Mr. Page said, “How are you now, good Doctor Caius!”

Slender said, “I wish you a good morning, sir.”

“Vat be all you — one, two, tree [three], four — come for?”

The Host replied, “To see you fight, to see you foin, to see you traverse; to see you here, to see you there; to see you pass your punto, your stock, your reverse, your distance, your montant.”

The Host was using a lot of fencing terms. To foin is to thrust. Traverse is a sideways thrust. Punto and stock are kinds of direct thrusts. Reverse is a backward thrust. Distance refers to keeping the proper amount of space between the two duelists. A montant is an upward thrust.

The Host added, “Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my François? Ha, bully! What says my Aesculapius? My Galen? My heart of elder? Is he dead, bully stale? Is he dead?”

The Host was referring to the duel that Doctor Caius was supposed to be having with Sir Hugh. Of course, the Host knew that Sir Hugh was not dead — the Host had sent him to a different field so that Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius would not hurt each other. In addition, the Host was calling Doctor Caius an Ethiopian because of his dark skin. Aesculapius and Galen were famous doctors of antiquity. The reference to the heart of elder was an insult. A heart of oak is a valiant heart — the oak is a hard wood. Wood from an elder tree is much softer than wood from an oak. Basically, the Host was having fun at the expense of Doctor Caius. He was deliberately using — and misusing — words that the Frenchman would not understand.

The word “stale” refers to urine. Doctors examined a patient’s urine when determining the patient’s state of health.

Doctor Caius replied, “By gar, he is de [the] coward Jack priest of de world; he is not [does not dare to] show his face.”

A Jack is a knave.

The Host said, “You are a Castalion-King-Urinal. You are Hector of Greece, my boy!”

Again, the Host was insulting Doctor Caius. He called him a Castalion, aka Castilian, aka a native of Spanish descent. The English were very proud of their then-recent victory over the

Spanish Armada. The Host also called Doctor Caius the King of the Urinals, again a reference to the doctor's use of analysis of urine in his medical practice. Finally, Hector of Greece was a joke by the Host. Hector was a Trojan, not a Greek. The Host was speaking quickly and piling on words that the French doctor was unlikely to understand.

Doctor Caius said to his four visitors, "Please, bear witness [witness] that me [I] have stay [stayed] six or seven — two, tree [three] — hours waiting for him, and he is no come."

Doctor Caius was referring to waiting for Sir Hugh so that they could fight their duel. At first, he said that he had been waiting for six or seven hours, but seeing the looks of incredulity on his visitors' faces, he amended that to two or three hours.

Justice Shallow said, "He is the wiser man, Doctor Caius. He is a curer of souls, and you are a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions."

To go against the hair meant to go against the grain. The expression referred to currying a horse: You should brush the horse's hair in the direction that the hair is growing.

Justice Shallow asked, "Isn't that true, Mr. Page?"

"Justice Shallow," Mr. Page replied, "you have yourself been a great fighter, although now you are a man of peace."

Justice Shallow replied, "Bodykins [By God's body], Mr. Page, though I now am old and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to take part in the fight. Though we are justices and doctors and churchmen, Mr. Page, we have some salt — liveliness — of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, Mr. Page."

"That is true, Justice Shallow," Mr. Page said.

"It will be found so, Mr. Page," Justice Shallow said. "Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn to uphold the peace. You have showed yourself to be a wise physician, and Sir Hugh has shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You must go with me, Doctor Caius."

The Host said, "Pardon us, guest-Justice."

Justice Shallow, who was from Gloucestershire, was visiting Windsor; he was staying at the Garter Inn.

The Host said to Doctor Caius, "A word, Monsieur Mock-water." They went a little distance away so that Justice Shallow could not hear them.

The Host had created the word "Mock-water" in mockery of Doctor Caius, who analyzed urine, which is sometimes called water.

"Mock-vater! Vat is dat?" Doctor Caius asked.

The Host replied, "Mock-water, in our English tongue, means valor or courage, bully."

"By gar, den, I have as mush [much] mock-vater as de [the, aka any] Englishman. Scurvy jack-dog priest! By gar, me vill [I will] cut [off] his ears."

"He will clapper-claw you tightly, bully."

“Clapper-de-claw! Vat is dat?”

The real meaning of “clapper-claw” was “beat” or “thrash” or “scratch” or “claw.”

The Host said, “That is, he will make you amends.”

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

“And I will provoke him to clapper-claw you,” the Host said, “or let him wag — let him go to the Devil.”

“Me tank [I thank] you for dat.”

“And, moreover, bully — but first, Mr. guest-Justice, and Mr. Page, and eke [also] Cavaleiro Slender, go you through the town — Windsor — to Frogmore.”

Frogmore was a small village on the other side of Windsor.

Mr. Page whispered to the Host, “Sir Hugh is there, isn’t he?”

The Host whispered back, “He is there: see what humor — mood — he is in; and I will bring the doctor to him by way of the fields. You will arrive first. Is this OK?”

Justice Shallow whispered, “We will do it.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender all said out loud, “*Adieu*, good Doctor Caius.”

They exited.

Doctor Caius said, “By gar, me vill [I will] kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.”

Doctor Caius was angry at Sir Hugh the priest because Sir Hugh was trying to convince Anne Page to marry Slender, whom Doctor Caius considered to be the equivalent of an ape.

“Let him die,” the Host said. “Sheathe your impatience, throw cold water on your anger. Go through the fields with me beyond Frogmore. I will take you to where Miss Anne Page is; she is feasting at a farmhouse — and you shall woo her. The game you are hunting will then be in sight. Isn’t that right?”

“By gar, me dank [I thank] you for dat,” Doctor Caius said. “By gar, I respect you, and I shall procure-a you de good guest [guests]: de Earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.”

“For the which I will be your adversary toward Anne Page. Isn’t that a good thing to say?”

Of course, the Host expected Doctor Caius to think that the Host would be his *advocate* — not adversary — with Anne Page.

“By gar, it is good; vell [well] said.”

“Let us go, then,” the Host said.

“Follow at my heels, Jack Rugby,” Doctor Caius said.

They departed.

## CHAPTER 3

— 3.1 —

The Welsh priest Sir Hugh Evans and Simple, who was Slender's servant, were in a field near Frogmore. They had been waiting for Doctor Caius to show up to fight a duel. Sir Hugh had a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. Simple was holding Sir Hugh's cloak — a loose flowing upper garment.

Sir Hugh said, "I ask you now, good Mr. Slender's serving-man, and friend Simple by your name, which way have you looked for Master Caius, who calls himself doctor of physic [medicine]?"

"Sir, I have looked in the direction of Windsor Little Park, in the direction of Windsor Great Park, and in almost every direction, including in the direction of the village named Old Windsor. In fact, I have looked in every direction except in the direction of Windsor itself," Simple replied.

"I most feheemently [vehemently] desire you to also look that way."

"I will, sir."

Simple exited.

Sir Hugh's feelings were mixed up. He did not know whether to feel sad because he was about to fight a duel although he was a priest or to feel angry because he had reason to feel anger toward Doctor Caius.

He said to himself, "Pless [Bless] my soul, how full of chollors [cholers, aka angry feelings] I am, and trempling [trembling] of mind! I shall be glad if he have deceived me. How melancholies I am! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard when I have good opportunities for the 'ork [work]. Pless my soul!"

By "I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard," Sir Hugh meant that he would knock the doctor's urinals — glass bottles in which urine was collected in order to be inspected — about his head.

Sir Hugh sang this:

*"To shallow rivers, to whose falls*

*"Melodious birds sings madrigals;*

*"There will we make our peds [beds] of roses,*

*"And a thousand fragrant posies.*

*"To shallow —"*

Then he stopped singing and said, "Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry."

Then he sang this:

*"Melodious birds sing madrigals —"*

“*When as I sat in Pabylon [Babylon] —*

“*And a thousand vagram [vagrant, but Sir Hugh meant “fragrant”] posies.*

“*To shallow ...*”

Simple returned and said, “Yonder he is coming this way, Sir Hugh.”

“He’s welcome,” Sir Hugh replied.

Sir Hugh sang this:

“*To shallow rivers, to whose falls —*”

He then said, “Heaven prosper the right! What weapons is he carrying?”

“No weapons, sir, that I could see,” Simple said.

He added, “There are also coming my master, Justice Shallow, and another gentleman, from a slightly different direction — from Frogmore, over the stile, this way. They are close by.”

“Please, give me my cloak,” Sir Hugh said.

Realizing that his arms were occupied with holding a Bible and a sword, he added, “Or else keep it in your arms.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender arrived. Mr. Page and Justice Shallow were going to pretend that they did not know that Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius were supposed to fight a duel.

Justice Shallow said to Sir Hugh, “How are you now, Mr. Parson? Good morning, good Sir Hugh.”

He saw the Bible in Sir Hugh’s hand and said, “Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.”

Mr. Slender heard the reference to a book and thought, *Ah, sweet Anne Page!* He was imagining that he was in love with Anne Page.

Mr. Page said, “May God save you, good Sir Hugh!”

“God pless you from His mercy sake, all of you!” Sir Hugh replied.

Justice Shallow, noticing the sword that Sir Hugh was holding, said, “What, the sword and the word! Do you study them both, Mr. Parson?”

Mr. Page said, “And you are still youthful! You must be still youthful because you are not wearing a cloak on this raw, cold, rheumatism-causing day!”

“There is reasons and causes for it,” Sir Hugh replied.

Mr. Page said, “We have come to you to do a good deed, Mr. Parson.”

“Fery [Very] well,” Sir Hugh replied. “What is it?”

“Yonder is a most reverend gentleman,” Mr. Page said, “who, most likely having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.”

Justice Shallow added, "I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of his position, gravity, and learning be so wide of his own respect — he has completely lost control of himself."

"Who is he?" Sir Hugh asked.

"I think you know him: Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician," Mr. Page said.

"Got's [God's] will, and His passion of my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge — I would just as soon hear about a mess of porridge as hear about him!"

"Why?" Mr. Page asked.

Sir Hugh replied, "He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates [Hippocrates] and Galen than a mess of porridge — and he is a knave besides; he is as cowardly a knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal."

Hippocrates, like Galen, was an ancient doctor of medicine. From Hippocrates, we get the Hippocratic Oath.

Mr. Page said to Justice Shallow, "I promise you, he's the man who should fight with him."

In other words, Mr. Page was pretending to just now realize that Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius intended to fight each other. He was saying to the other people that Sir Hugh is the man who should — and intends to — fight Doctor Caius.

Hearing the reference to his rival, Doctor Caius, Slender thought, *Oh, sweet Anne Page!*

Justice Shallow said, "It appears so by his weapons. Keep Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius apart — here comes Doctor Caius."

The Host of the Garter Inn, Doctor Caius, and John Rugby walked up to the group of men.

Mr. Page said to Sir Hugh, "Good Mr. Parson, put away your weapon."

Justice Shallow said to Doctor Caius, "You do the same, good Doctor."

Simple had not noticed that Doctor Caius was carrying a sword.

The Host said, "Disarm both men, and let them talk to each other. Let them keep their limbs whole and hack our English."

"Please," Doctor Caius said to Sir Hugh, "I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear. Wherefore vill you not [Why won't you] meet-a me in a duel?"

Sir Hugh whispered to Doctor Caius, "Please, be patient. We will meet soon at a good time."

"By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape!"

Doctor Caius was varying the insult of calling someone a jackanape.

Sir Hugh whispered to Doctor Caius, "Please let us not be laughing-stocks for other men's entertainments; I want to be friends with you, and I will one way or other make you amends."

He then said loudly, "I will knog [knock] your urinals about your knave's cockscomb [head] for missing your meetings and appointments."

Doctor Caius said, “*Diable!* [The Devil!] Jack Rugby — mine Host de Jartere [Garter] — have I not stay [wait] for him to kill him? Have I not, at de place I did appoint?”

Sir Hugh said, “As I am a Christians soul now, look you, this is the place appointed: I’ll be judgment [judged] by mine Host of the Garter.”

Both men had been misled by the Host of the Garter Inn, who had sent them to different places so that they would not fight each other but could be laughed at.

The Host said, “Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer!”

Gallia and Gaul both refer to France, but the Host meant for the terms to refer to Wales and France. He should have used “Galles” instead of “Gallia” — “Galles” is the French name for Wales.

Doctor Caius said, “Ay, dat is very good; excellent.”

The Host said, “Peace, I say! Be quiet! Listen to the Host of the Garter. Am I politic? Am I subtle? Am I a Machiavel?”

The Host was asking, *Am I sneaky?* The answer could very well rightly be, *Yes.* Machiavelli was the author of *The Prince*, a treatise about political intrigue and how to get power.

The Host did not want either Sir Hugh or Doctor Caius to be hurt in a duel; both provided useful services to the community.

The Host continued, “Shall I lose my doctor? No; he gives me the potions and the motions.”

The potions were laxatives, and the motions were the result of the laxatives.

The Host continued, “Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? No; he gives me the pro-verbs and the no-verbs.”

Pro-verbs, aka proverbs, taught wisdom and what we ought to do; “pro” means “in favor of.” No-verbs taught us what not to do: “Thou shalt not....”

The Host said to Doctor Caius, “Give me your hand, terrestrial; good.” He then said to Sir Hugh, “Give me your hand, celestial; good.”

Then he said to both of them, “Boys of learning, I have deceived you both; I have directed you to different places: Your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let draughts of heated wine sweetened with burnt sugar be the conclusion of your quarrel.”

The Host continued, “No one has any need to use these swords. Follow me, lads of peace; follow, follow, follow. Let us go to the Garter Inn.”

Justice Shallow said, “Believe me, he is a madcap Host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.”

Slender thought, *Oh, sweet Anne Page!*

Justice Shallow, Slender, Mr. Page, and the Host departed, leaving Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius behind. The two men no longer wanted to fight each other, but they were angry about being made laughingstocks.

Doctor Caius said, “Ha, do I perceive dat? Have you — the Host — make-a de sot [fool] of us, ha, ha?”

“This is rich,” Sir Hugh said sarcastically. “He has made us his vlouting-stog [flouting-stock, aka laughing-stock]. I desire you that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together [knock our brains together, aka put our heads together] to be revenge [revenged] on this same scall, scurvy, cogging companion: the Host of the Garter.”

Both “scall” and “scurvy” referred to skin diseases. By “cogging companion,” Sir Hugh meant “cheating rascal.”

Doctor Caius said, “By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me [to] where is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me, too.”

“Well, I will smite his noddles [head]. Please, follow me.”

— 3.2 —

Mrs. Page and Robin, Falstaff’s page, talked together on a Windsor street. Robin had been walking ahead of Mrs. Page.

“Keep on going, little gallant,” Mrs. Page said. “You used to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Which do you prefer? To lead my eyes, or to eye your master’s heels?”

Robin replied, “I had rather, truly, to go before you like a man than to follow him like a dwarf.”

“You are a flattering boy,” Mrs. Page said. “Now I see you’ll be a courtier.”

Mr. Ford walked up to them and said, “It is good to see you, Mrs. Page. Where are you going?”

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

“Yes, and she is as idle as she can be without going to pieces because she lacks company. I think that if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.”

“You can sure of that — we would marry two other husbands.”

Looking at Robin, who was gaily dressed in eccentric clothing provided to him by Falstaff, Mr. Ford asked, “Where did you get this pretty weather-cock?”

“I cannot remember what the dickens his name is from whom my husband got him,” Mrs. Page replied.

She asked Robin, “What do you call your knight’s name?”

“Sir John Falstaff,” Robin replied.

“Sir John Falstaff!” Mr. Ford exclaimed.

“That is the man,” Mrs. Page said. “I can never remember his name. There is such a friendship between my good husband and him!”

She asked, “Is your wife really at home?”

“Indeed she is.”

“If you don’t mind, I will leave now,” Mrs. Page said. “I am sick until I see her.”

Mrs. Page and Robin departed.

Mr. Ford said to himself, “Has Mr. Page any brains? Has he any eyes? Has he any thinking? Sure, he does, but they sleep; he has no use of them.

“Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty miles as easily as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score — two hundred and forty — paces. He indulges his wife’s inclination; he gives her folly encouragement and opportunity. And now she’s going to my wife, and Falstaff’s page is with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind — it is obvious what bad thing is going to happen. And Falstaff’s page is with her! Good plots, they are laid; and our wives who revolt against their marital vows share damnation together.

“Well, I will catch Falstaff with my wife, then I will torment my wife. I will pluck the borrowed veil of virtue from the only-appears-to-be-virtuous Mrs. Page, I will reveal that Mr. Page himself is an overly confident and perverse Actaeon, aka cuckold; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbors shall be spectators.”

A clock struck the hour.

Mr. Ford said to himself, “The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search my house. There I shall find Falstaff: I shall be rather praised for this than mocked; it is as positive as the earth is firm that Falstaff is there in my house. I will go.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, Slender, the Host, Sir Hugh Evans, Doctor Caius, and John Rugby walked up to Mr. Ford and greeted him: “It is good to see you.”

“Believe me, this is a good knot — group — of people,” Mr. Ford said.

He wanted them to be witnesses to his wife’s infidelity, so he said, “I have good cheer — food, drink, and entertainment — at home; and I invite you all to go with me.”

Justice Shallow said, “I must excuse myself, Mr. Ford.”

Slender added, “And so must I, sir. We have arranged to dine with Miss Anne, and I would not break my promise to her for more money than I’ll speak of.”

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

Justice Shallow and Slender lived in Gloucestershire, but they had lingered at Windsor because of hope for a marriage between Slender and Anne Page.

“I hope I have your good will, father Page,” Slender said. He hoped that Mr. Page would soon be his father-in-law.

“You have, Mr. Slender,” Mr. Page said. “I am entirely for you, and I hope that you will marry my daughter.”

He added, “Doctor Caius, my wife is entirely for you and wants our daughter to marry you.”

Doctor Caius replied, “Yes, by gar [God]; and de maid [the maiden] is love-a me: my nursh-a [nurse, aka housekeeper] Quickly tell me so mush [much].”

The Host asked Mr. Page, “What do you think about young Mr. Fenton? He capers, he dances, he has the eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday words in a pleasing manner, and he smells pleasant like April and May. He will succeed in marrying Anne! He will succeed! It is in his buttons! Underneath those buttons is a male body a young maiden will like! He will succeed!”

“He will not succeed in obtaining my consent to the match, I promise you,” Mr. Page said. “The gentleman has no property or income, he kept company with the wild Prince Hal of Wales and with Poins, he is of too high a social status for we middle-class folk, and he knows too much of upper-class people and behavior to fit in with us. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance — he will not repair his broken finances with the bandage of my money.”

Mr. Page had used an interesting image when he said that “he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance.” The image was that of a person tying a knot with the help of another person’s finger. The first person would tie part of a knot, the second person would place a finger in the right spot to keep the knot from becoming undone, and the first person would tie the rest of the knot.

Mr. Page continued, “If he marries my daughter, then let him marry her without obtaining a dowry. The wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not Fenton’s way.”

Mr. Ford said, “I ask you heartily — some of you go home with me to dinner. Besides your food and drink, you shall have entertainment: I will show you a monster.”

This got their attention.

He then said, “Doctor Caius, you shall go with me; so shall you, Mr. Page; and so shall you, Sir Hugh.”

Justice Shallow said, “Well, fare you well.”

He whispered to Slender, “We shall have the freer wooing at Mr. Page’s.”

Justice Shallow and Slender exited.

Doctor Caius said, “Go home, John Rugby; I will go home soon.”

Rugby departed.

The Host said, “Farewell, my hearts. I will go to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary wine with him.”

Mr. Ford thought, *I think I shall drink some pipe-wine first with him; I’ll make him dance.*

Mr. Ford was capable of wit. He was punning on “pipe,” a word that could mean a musical instrument or a cask for wine. The Host’s reference to canary wine had made that pun occur to Mr. Ford. A “canary” was a type of dance as well as a type of wine. And by making Falstaff dance, Mr. Ford meant that he would beat him — that would make Falstaff dance around to escape the beating.

He said out loud, “Will you come with me, friends?”

They replied, “We will go with you to see this monster.”

In a room in the Fords' house, Mrs. Ford called for two servants: "John! Robert!"

Mrs. Page said, "Quickly, quickly! Is the buck-basket —"

A buck-basket was a laundry basket. Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford had plans for it, and Mrs. Page wanted it to be ready.

Mrs. Ford knew what Mrs. Page wanted to know, and so she interrupted, "— it's ready."

She called, "Robert!"

John and Robert entered the room; they were carrying the buck-basket.

Mrs. Page said, "Come, come, come!"

Mrs. Ford said, "Here, set it down."

"Give your men their instructions," Mrs. Page said. "We must be brief. Falstaff is coming soon."

"As I told you before, John and Robert," Mrs. Ford said, "be ready here close by in the brew-house, and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause or staggering take this buck-basket on your shoulders. Then trudge with it quickly, and carry it among the whitsters — the people who whiten the laundry — in Datchet Meadow, and there empty it in the muddy ditch by the Thames River."

Mrs. Page asked them, "You will do it?"

Mrs. Ford replied for her servants, "I have told them over and over; they lack no orders. They know what to do."

She said to John and Robert, "Go now, and come when you are called."

John and Robert exited.

Mrs. Page said, "Here comes little Robin."

Robin, Falstaff's page, entered the room.

Mrs. Ford said to him, "How are you, my young sparrow-hawk! What news do you bring with you?"

"My master, Sir John, has come in at your back door, Mrs. Ford, and he requests your company."

"You little Jack-a-Lent," Mrs. Page said. "Have you been true to us? You haven't told Falstaff anything, have you?"

A Jack-a-Lent was a gaily dressed puppet that was popular during Lent. Falstaff had dressed his young page in gaily colored clothing.

"I have been true to you," Robin said to Mrs. Page. "My master does not know that you are here, and he has threatened to put me into everlasting liberty if I tell you — Mrs. Page — that he is here, for he swears he'll turn me away and not employ me."

“You are a good boy,” Mrs. Page said. “This secrecy of yours shall be a tailor to you and shall make you a new jacket and stockings. I will make you a present of them.”

She added, “Now I’ll go and hide.”

“Do so,” Mrs. Ford replied.

She said to Robin, “Go tell your master that I am alone.”

Robin departed to carry out his errand.

She then said, “Mrs. Page, remember your cue to come out of your hiding place.”

“I will,” Mrs. Page said. “If I do not, hiss at me.”

She hid.

Mrs. Ford said, “That’s done. We will treat this unwholesome humidity — this gross watery pumpkin — the way he ought to be treated; we’ll teach him to know the difference between turtledoves and jays.”

Turtledoves were famed for their faithfulness to their mates. Jays were brightly colored and so were associated with painted, loose women. Painted women were women who used cosmetics. Loose women were sexually promiscuous women or prostitutes.

Falstaff entered the room and said, “Have I caught you, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let me die because I have lived long enough. This is the achievement of my ambition. Oh, blessed hour!”

Mrs. Ford replied, “Oh, sweet Sir John!”

“Mrs. Ford, I cannot fawn,” Falstaff said. “I cannot prate, Mrs. Ford. Now I shall sin by making this wish: I wish that your husband were dead. I’ll swear it before the best lord; if your husband were dead, I would make you my lady.”

“I your lady, Sir John!” Mrs. Ford said. “Alas, I should be a pitiful lady!”

“Let the court of France show me such another lady as you,” Falstaff said. “I see how your eye would emulate the diamond; you have the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance. You can look good wearing any headdress: a headdress that is shaped like a ship, a headdress that is fanciful, or any headdress that comes from the city of fashion: Venice.”

“I wear a plain kerchief, Sir John,” Mrs. Ford said. “My brows become nothing else, nor do they look that well on their own.”

“By the Lord, you are a traitor to yourself to say so,” Falstaff said. “You would make a perfect courtier; and the firm placing of your foot would give an excellent motion to your turning and walking in a half-hooped petticoat. I see what you would be, if Fortune (your foe) were — not Nature — your friend. Nature is your friend and has made you beautiful, but Fortune is your foe and has made you a middle-class wife rather than a great lady. Come, you cannot deny it.”

“Believe me, there are no such qualities in me,” Mrs. Ford said.

“What made me love you?” Falstaff said. “Those qualities that you deny having. Let that persuade you there’s something extraordinary in you. Come, I cannot fawn and say you are this and that, like a many of these lispings hawthorn-buds, who come like women in men’s apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury Street in London when it is filled with sweet-smelling herbs for sale. I cannot fawn, but I love you; I love no one but you; and you deserve my love.”

“Do not betray me, sir,” Mrs. Ford said. “I am afraid that you love Mrs. Page.”

“You might as well say that I love to walk by the gate of the Counter, a prison for debtors. The Counter is famous for its reeking stink, and it is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.”

“Well, Heaven knows how I love you,” Mrs. Ford said, “and you shall one day find out how much I love you.”

“Keep in that mind,” Falstaff said. “I’ll deserve it.”

“I must tell you that you deserve to find out how much I love you, or else I could not be in that particular frame of mind.”

Robin entered the room and said, “Mrs. Ford! Mrs. Ford! Mrs. Page is at the door, sweating and puffing and looking wildly, and she wants to speak with you right away.”

“She must not see me,” Falstaff said. “I will hide behind this wall hanging.”

“Please, do that,” Mrs. Ford said. “She is a very tattling woman. If she sees you, she will tell everyone that she saw you here.”

Falstaff hid.

Mrs. Page came into the room.

Mrs. Ford said, “What’s the matter?”

“Oh, Mrs. Ford, what have you done? You’re shamed!” Mrs. Page replied. “You’re overthrown! You’re undone for ever! You’re ruined!”

“What’s the matter, good Mrs. Page?”

“How could you, Mrs. Ford! You have an honest man as your husband, and you are giving him such cause to suspect you!”

“What cause is that?”

“What cause to suspect you! You know what cause! I have been much mistaken about you!”

“Why, what’s the matter?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“Your husband is coming here, woman, with all the officers in Windsor,” Mrs. Page said, “to search for a gentleman who he says is here now in the house by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. Your reputation will be ruined.”

“You are wrong, I hope,” Mrs. Ford replied.

“I pray to Heaven that it is not true that you have such a man here! But it is very certain that your husband is coming here with half of the citizens of Windsor at his heels to search for such a man,” Mrs. Page said. “I have come ahead of him to warn you. If you know that you are

innocent, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a lover here, get him out — and quickly. Be not so amazed that it paralyzes you so that you can do nothing; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.”

“What shall I do?” Mrs. Ford said. “There is a gentleman here. He is my dear friend; and I fear not my own shame as much as I fear his peril. I would rather have him out of the house than for me to possess a thousand pounds.”

“For shame!” Mrs. Page said. “Don’t waste time engaging in wishful thinking. Your husband is almost here, so think of some way to get your gentleman friend out of your house. You cannot hide him inside. Oh, how you have deceived me! Look, here is a buck-basket. If your gentleman friend is of any reasonable size, he may hide in the buck-basket, and we can throw dirty linen over him to hide him. Then you can send your two male servants to take the buck-basket to Datchet Meadow as if the linen were going to be washed or whitened.”

“He’s too big to hide in the buck-basket,” Mrs. Ford said. “What shall I do?”

Falstaff came out from his hiding place and said, “Let me see it! Let me see it! Oh, let me see it! I’ll fit! I’ll fit! Follow your friend’s advice! I’ll fit!”

Mrs. Page took Falstaff’s love letter to her out of her pocket and said, “Sir John Falstaff! Is this your letter, knight?”

She was pretending to wonder why Falstaff was with Mrs. Ford; after all, he had sent a love letter to her: Mrs. Page.

Falstaff whispered to her, “I love you. Help me get away. Let me hide in the buck-basket. I’ll never —”

He got in the buck-basket, and the two women started to cover him with dirty linen.

Mrs. Page said to Robin, “Help to cover your master, boy.”

She then said, “Call your male servants, Mrs. Ford.”

Finally, she said to Falstaff, “You lying knight!”

Mrs. Ford called, “John! Robert!”

The servants entered the room.

She told them, “Go and pick up these clothes here quickly. Where’s the cowl-staff — the pole you use to carry the buck-basket?”

One of the servants found the cowl-staff, but he was working too slowly for Mrs. Ford, who told him, “How you dawdle! Carry the clothes to the laundress in Datchet Meadow. Quickly! Quickly!”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh entered the room.

Robin took the opportunity to exit, unnoticed.

Mr. Ford said to his wife, “Please, come near to me. If I suspect you without cause, why then you can make fun of me. Then I will be your laughingstock; I will deserve it.”

He said to the servants, "What are you doing? Where are you carrying this buck-basket?"

A servant replied, "To the laundress."

Mrs. Ford said, "Why, what have you to do with where they carry it? Are you now in charge of laundry in this house? Are you now in charge of the buck-basket?"

"Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck!" Mr. Ford said. He was thinking of a horned deer and the horns of a cuckold. He said, "Buck! Buck! Buck! Yes, buck; I promise you, buck; and of the season, too, it shall appear."

By season, he meant the rutting season, when a buck's antlers were at their largest.

The servants left, carrying Falstaff away in the buck-basket.

Mr. Ford said, "Gentlemen, I dreamed last night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here are my keys. Ascend to my chambers; search, seek, find out. I'll bet that we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this exit first."

He locked the door and said, "That's done. Let's see an escape now."

Mr. Page said, "Good Mr. Ford, stay calm. You are growing overexcited. You wrong yourself too much."

"It is true that I am perturbed, Mr. Page," Mr. Ford said. "Up, gentlemen. You shall see some entertainment soon. Follow me, gentlemen."

He left the room.

Sir Hugh said, "This is fery [very] fantastical humors [moods] and jealousies."

"By gar, this is no [not] the fashion of France; it is not jealous [no jealousy is] in France," Doctor Caius said.

"Let us follow Mr. Ford, gentlemen," Mr. Page said. "We will see the result of his search."

Mr. Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh exited to follow Mr. Ford.

Mrs. Page said, "Is there not a double excellency in this?"

Mrs. Ford replied, "I don't know which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or Sir John. My husband is wrong to be jealous, and Falstaff is wrong to think that I love him."

"What a fright Falstaff was in when your husband asked who was in the basket!" Mrs. Page said.

"I am half afraid that Falstaff will have need of washing; I think that he soiled himself," Mrs. Ford said. "Therefore, throwing him into the water will do him a benefit."

"Hang him, dishonest rascal! I wish that all men who do the same thing as Falstaff could suffer the same distress."

"I think my husband has some special reason to suspect that Falstaff was here," Mrs. Ford said, "because I never saw him so gross in his jealousy until now."

“I will lay a plot to see if that is true,” Mrs. Page said, “and we will still be able to play more tricks on Falstaff. His dissolute disease will scarcely be cured by this medicine: His being dunked in the water will not stop him from pursuing us.”

Mrs. Ford asked, “Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress Quickly, to him, and make an excuse for his being thrown into the water; and give him more hope so that we can punish him a second time?”

“We will do it,” Mrs. Page said. “Let us send a message to him to meet us tomorrow at eight o’clock in the morning. We will tell him that we want to make amends for what has happened to him.”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh entered the room.

Mr. Ford said, “I cannot find him. Maybe the knave bragged about doing something that he could not actually do.”

Mrs. Page whispered to Mrs. Ford, “Did you hear that?”

Mrs. Ford said, “You think you are treating me well, Mr. Ford, do you?”

“Yes, I do,” he replied. He was still half-suspicious that his wife was unfaithful.

“May Heaven make you better than your thoughts!”

“Amen!” he said.

Mrs. Page said, “You do yourself mighty wrong, Mr. Ford.”

“Yes, yes, I must bear it,” he replied. He was quickly beginning to realize that he was most likely wrong to suspect his wife of being unfaithful and therefore he had acted badly.

Sir Hugh said, “If there be anypody [anybody] in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the cupboards, may Heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!”

“By gar, nor I, too; there is no bodies,” Doctor Caius said.

Mr. Page said, “Shame! Shame! Shame on you, Mr. Ford! Are you not ashamed? What spirit, what Devil suggests this delusion? I would not have your distemper of jealousy for the wealth of Windsor Castle. You are acting as if you were mentally unstable.”

“This is my fault, Mr. Page. I suffer for it,” Mr. Ford replied.

“You suffer for a pad [bad] conscience,” Sir Hugh said. “Your wife is as honest a ’omans as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred, too.”

Sir Hugh’s lack of facility in English betrayed him here. It sounded as he were desiring Mrs. Ford.

“By gar, I see it is an honest woman,” Doctor Caius said.

“Well, I promised you a dinner,” Mr. Ford said. “Come, come, walk in the Park with me until dinner is ready.”

He added to his wife, “Please, pardon me. Later I will tell you why I have done this.”

He then said, "Wife and Mrs. Page, please pardon me; I beg you heartily to pardon me."

Mr. Page said, "Let's walk in the Park and then go in to dinner, but believe me, we'll mock Mr. Ford. I invite you men tomorrow morning to my house to eat breakfast; afterward, we'll go birding together. I have a fine hawk that will scare birds from the bushes. Shall we go birding together?"

"Yes," Mr. Ford said. "I accept your invitation."

"If there is one, I shall make two in the company," Sir Hugh said.

"If dere be one or two, I shall make-a the turd [third]," Doctor Caius said.

"Please, let's all walk in the Park, Mr. Page," Mr. Ford said.

Sir Hugh whispered to Doctor Caius, "Please now, remembrance tomorrow on that lousy knave, the Host."

The two had a plot to wreak on the Host of the Garter Inn the following day.

"Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart!" Doctor Caius said.

"He is a lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!" Sir Hugh said.

They left to walk in the Park.

#### — 3.4 —

Fenton and Anne Page were talking together in front of the Pages' house.

"I see I cannot get your father's respect and friendship," Fenton said. "Therefore, send me no more to talk to him, sweet Nan."

"What shall we do then?" Anne Page replied.

"Why, you must be yourself and act independently of him. He objects that I am too great of birth and my social status is too high to marry you — and he objects that my estate has been devastated by my expenses and so I am seeking to heal my lack of fortune by marrying you and getting access to his wealth through your dowry. Besides these objections to our being married, he lays other objections before me: my past riotous behavior and my wild friends. And he tells me that it is impossible that I should love you except as a way to gain wealth from him."

"Maybe he is telling you the truth."

"No," Fenton said. "May Heaven favor me in the future only if I am speaking the truth to you. I will, however, confess that your father's wealth was the first motive for my wooing you, Anne. Yet, by wooing you, I found you to be of more value than gold coins or wealth in sealed bags, and now I woo you for the wonderful riches of yourself."

"Gentle Mr. Fenton, still seek my father's respect and approval; continue to seek it, sir. If the most humble suit made at the most favorable opportunity cannot get you my father's approval, why then —"

She saw Justice Shallow, Slender, and Mistress Quickly coming and said, "Let's go over here!"

They went a short distance away and talked together quietly.

Justice Shallow said, "Break up the conversation between Fenton and Anne Page, Mistress Quickly. My kinsman Slender shall speak for himself to Anne Page."

"I'll make a shaft or a bolt on it," Slender said. "By God's eyelid, it is worth a try."

Slender was saying that one way or another he would propose to Anne Page. A shaft and a bolt were references to different kinds of arrows. A shaft was a long, thin arrow, while a bolt was shorter and thicker and shot by crossbows.

Justice Shallow said, "Don't be dismayed."

Slender replied, "No, she shall not dismay me. That will not happen, but I am afraid."

Mistress Quickly said to Anne Page, "Mr. Slender would like to speak a word with you."

"I will go to him," she replied.

She whispered to Fenton, "Slender is my father's choice for my future husband. Oh, what a world of vile ill-favored faults looks handsome when it comes with an income of three hundred pounds a year!"

Mistress Quickly asked, "How are you, good Mr. Fenton? Please, may I speak a word with you?"

Justice Shallow said, "Anne Page is coming; go after her, kinsman. Oh, boy, you had a father! If you succeed in catching her, you will be a father!"

"I had a father, Miss Anne," Slender said. "My uncle can tell you good jests about him."

He said to Justice Swallow, "Please, uncle, tell Miss Anne the jest of how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle."

Slender was botching his wooing of Anne.

Justice Shallow said, "Miss Anne, my cousin loves you."

Slender said, "Yes, I do; I love you as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire."

Slender's comment could be phrased better.

"He will maintain you like a gentlewoman," Justice Shallow said.

"Yes, that I will," Slender said, "come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a squire."

Slender was saying that he would provide for Anne as well as any person, no matter who, could provide for her — provided that they were not too high in rank. The phrase "cut and long-tail" meant "anyone." The literal meaning was dogs with cut, aka docked, tails and dogs with long tails; in other words, all dogs.

Justice Shallow said, "He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure."

This meant that if Slender were to die, Anne, his widow, would receive an income of a hundred and fifty pounds per year.

Anne Page said, "Good Mr. Shallow, let him woo for himself."

Justice Shallow said, "Good idea. I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort."

Justice Shallow was pleased that Anne wanted Slender to woo for himself; he regarded that as evidence that Anne was interested in Slender.

Justice Shallow said to Slender, who had stepped away a few paces, "She wants to speak to you, kinsman. I'll leave you two alone."

Anne said, "Hello, Mr. Slender."

Slender replied, "Hello, good Miss Anne."

"What is your will?"

"My will?" Slender said. "By God's heart, that's a pretty jest indeed! I have not made my will yet, I thank Heaven. I am not such a sickly creature as to need to do that. I give Heaven praise."

"I mean, Mr. Slender, what do you want of me?"

Slender replied, "Truly, for my own part, I want little or nothing of you. Your father and my uncle have made motions."

Slender meant that a marriage proposal had been made, but "motions" was a word that also referred to bowel movements.

Slender continued, "If it should be my luck to marry you, good; if not, may the man who wins you be happy! Your father and my uncle can tell you how things go better than I can; you may ask your father because here he comes."

Mr. and Mrs. Page walked over to the others.

Mr. Page said, "Hello, Mr. Slender. Love him, daughter Anne. Why, look here! What is Mr. Fenton doing here? You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house. I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of. She is engaged."

"Mr. Page, don't be impatient with me," Fenton replied.

Mrs. Page said, "Good Mr. Fenton, do not visit my daughter."

"She is not a match for you," Mr. Page said. "She will not marry you."

Mr. Page wanted Slender to be his son-in-law.

Fenton said to Mr. Page, "Sir, will you listen to me?"

"No, good Mr. Fenton," he replied.

He then said, "Come, Mr. Shallow; come, son Slender, come in. Knowing my mind and knowing that I do not want you to marry my daughter, you wrong me by coming here, Mr. Fenton."

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender went inside the Pages' house.

Mistress Quickly advised Fenton, "Speak to Mrs. Page."

Fenton said, "Good Mrs. Page, because I love your daughter in such a righteous fashion as I do, I must — against all barriers and rebukes, and contrary to good manners — advance the colors of my love as if I were an army mounting an attack. I must not retire; therefore, let me have your good will."

"Good mother," Anne Page said, "do not marry me to yonder fool."

"I do not intend to," Mrs. Page said. "I seek you a better husband than Slender."

Mistress Quickly said, "She wants you to marry my master, Doctor Caius."

"Alas, I would prefer to be buried alive up to my neck in the earth and bowled to death with turnips used as bowling balls!" Anne cried.

"Come, do not make yourself feel bad," Mrs. Page said.

She added, "Good Mr. Fenton, I will not be your friend or your enemy. I will question my daughter about her love for you, and I will take her answers into consideration. Until then, farewell, sir. She must go inside, or her father will be angry."

"Farewell, gentle Mrs. Page; farewell, Nan," Fenton said.

Mrs. Page and Anne went inside the house.

Mistress Quickly said to Fenton, "This — Mrs. Page taking the feelings of her daughter into consideration — is my doing. Said I, 'Will you cast away your child on a fool, and a physician? Look at Mr. Fenton instead.' This change in Mrs. Page is my doing."

"I thank you," Fenton said, "and I ask you, please, to give my sweet Nan this ring sometime tonight. Here's some money for your pains."

"May Heaven send you good fortune!" Mistress Quickly said.

Fenton departed.

Mistress Quickly said to herself, "He has a kind heart. A woman would run through fire and water for such a man with such a kind heart. But yet I wish that my master, Doctor Caius, had Miss Anne to marry; or I wish that Slender had her to marry; or, truly, I wish that Mr. Fenton had her to marry. I will do what I can for all three of them; for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously [especially] I will do what I can for Mr. Fenton. Well, I must go on another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses: Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. What a beast am I to slack on doing my errand!"

— 3.5 —

The following morning, Falstaff was in a room in the Garter Inn. He was still recovering from having been dumped into the cold water of the Thames River. With him was Bardolph, now a bartender at the Garter.

Falstaff said, "Bardolph, I say —"

"Here I am, sir."

“Go fetch me a quart of wine; put a piece of toast in it.”

Bardolph departed to get the wine and toast.

Falstaff said to himself, “Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrowful of butcher’s offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? Well, if I am served such another trick, I’ll have my brains taken out and buttered, and I will give them to a dog for a new-year’s gift. Buttered brains are foolish brains. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned the blind puppies of a bitch, fifteen in the litter, and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as Hell, I should go all the way down. I would have been drowned, except that the shore was shelvy and shallow. Drowning is a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy — of dead, swollen flesh.”

Bardolph returned with the wine and toast.

He said, “Mistress Quickly, sir, is here to speak with you.”

“Let me pour in some wine to mix with the Thames water I swallowed last night; for my belly’s as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins of my lust. Call her in.”

Bardolph called, “Come in, woman!”

As Bardolph was calling for Mistress Quickly, Falstaff drank the quart of wine.

Mistress Quickly entered the room and said, “By your leave, sir. I beg your pardon. I wish your worship a good morning.”

“Take away these chalices,” Falstaff said to Bardolph. “Go brew me a pottle of sack finely.”

The chalices were not used in religious services; they were simply small glasses. Falstaff, a big drinker of wine, wanted Bardolph to bring him a pottle — a half-gallon — of wine.

“With eggs in it, sir?” Bardolph asked.

“Just the wine itself,” Falstaff said. “I’ll have no pullet-sperm in my brewage.”

A pullet is a chicken.

Bardolph exited, and Falstaff said to Mistress Quickly, “Hello!”

“Sir, I come to your worship from Mrs. Ford.”

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

“Alas the day!” Mistress Quickly said. “Good heart, that was not her fault. She does so scold her men-servants; they mistook their erection.”

Mistress Quickly meant directions or instructions, not erection, but Falstaff replied, “So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman’s promise. I never should have believed a foolish woman.”

“Well, she laments, sir, for what happened. It would yearn [Mistress Quickly meant ‘grieve’] your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a-birding away from home; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine. I must carry a message from you to her quickly. She will make you amends, I promise you.”

“Well, I will come and visit her,” Falstaff said. “Tell her so; and tell her to think about what a man is: Let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.”

Falstaff meant that he was showing merit by being persistent: He was not easily giving up his attempt to commit adultery with Mrs. Ford.

“I will tell her,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Do so. Between nine and ten, did you say?”

“Eight and nine, sir.”

“Well, go to her,” Falstaff said. “I will not miss my meeting with her.”

“Peace be with you, sir.”

Mistress Quickly exited.

Falstaff said to himself, “I marvel that I have not heard from Mr. Brook; he sent me word to stay within the inn until he came. I like his money well. Oh, here he comes.”

Mr. Ford, disguised as Mr. Brook, entered the room.

“Bless you, sir!” Mr. Ford said.

“Hello, Mr. Brook, have you come to know what has happened between me and Ford’s wife?”

“That, indeed, Sir John, is my business here.”

“Mr. Brook, I will not lie to you. I was at her house the hour she asked me to come.”

“How did you do, sir?”

“Very badly, Mr. Brook.”

“Why? Did she change her mind?”

“No, Mr. Brook; but the prying cuckold who is her husband, Mr. Brook, dwelling in a continual alarm of jealousy, came in during our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, confessed our love for each other, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy.”

Falstaff was exaggerating his “success” with Mrs. Ford.

He continued, “Indeed, at the heels of Mr. Brook came a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his ill temper to search his house for his wife’s love.”

“What, while you were there?” the disguised Mr. Ford said.

“Yes, while I was there.”

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

“You shall hear the story,” Falstaff said. “As good luck would have it, Mrs. Page came in and told us that Ford was coming, and as a result of her cunning and Ford’s wife’s distraction, they put me in a buck-basket and Mrs. Ford’s servants carried me away from the house.”

“A buck-basket!”

“By the Lord, a buck-basket! They rammed me in with foul and dirty shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy handkerchiefs; Mr. Brook, there was the rankest collection of dirty clothing with the most villainous smell that ever offended nostril.”

“And how long did you lie there?”

“I will tell you, Mr. Brook, what I have suffered in my attempt to bring this woman to do evil for your benefit. After I was thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford’s knaves, aka his hinds and his servants, were ordered by Mrs. Ford to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet Lane, the lane that leads to Datchet Meadow. They took me on their shoulders and met the jealous knave their master in the doorway. He asked them once or twice what they had in their basket. I quaked for fear that the lunatic knave would have searched the basket; but fate, ordaining that Ford should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well, he continued on into the house to search it, and away went I with the foul clothes.

“But consider what happened next, Mr. Brook. I suffered the pangs of three different possible deaths. First, I could have died from an intolerable fright; I was afraid that I would be detected by a jealous rotten bellwether ram with a bell around its neck that leads the flock.

“Second, I had to bend, like a good bilbo sword, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head, in order to fit into the basket.”

Good swords could be bent without breaking. A sword from Bilbao, Spain, was tested for excellence by bending it from tip to hilt. If it did not break, it was a good sword. A peck is a quarter of a bushel; Sir Falstaff was complaining about his bulk being squeezed into a very small space.

Falstaff continued, “Third, I was stuffed in that basket like a strongly smelling distilled liquid in a glass container. And in that basket were stinking clothes that fermented in their own grease. Think of that — a man of my nature — think of that — who is as subject to heat as butter; I am a man of continual dissolving and thaw. I melt in heat like butter. It was a miracle that I escaped suffocation.

“And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish cooked with too much butter, I was then thrown into the Thames River, and glowing hot, I was cooled in that surge of cold water like a glowing-hot horseshoe thrown into water. Think of that — I was hissing hot — think of that, Mr. Brook.”

“In all seriousness,” Mr. Ford said, “I am sorry that for my sake you have suffered all this. My suit then is desperate; I assume that you will no longer try to seduce Mrs. Ford?”

“Mr. Brook, I will be thrown into the volcano Etna, as I have been into the Thames River, before I will stop trying to seduce her. Her husband is this morning gone hunting birds, and I have received from her another time to meet her. Between eight and nine is the hour, Mr. Brook.”

“It is already past eight, sir,” Mr. Ford said.

“Is it? I will then go to my appointment,” Falstaff said. “Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I succeed; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. *Adieu*. You shall have her, Mr. Brook; Mr. Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.”

Falstaff exited.

“Hmm!” Mr. Ford said to himself, “Is this a vision? Is this a dream? Do I sleep? Mr. Ford, wake up! Wake up, Mr. Ford! There’s a hole made in your best coat, Mr. Ford. Mr. Ford, you have a fault. This is what it is to be married! This is what it is to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am.”

Mr. Ford meant that he was a cuckold.

He continued, “I will now surprise Falstaff, the lecher. He is at my house. He cannot escape me; it is impossible for him to escape from me this time. He cannot creep into a purse that holds small coins, nor into a pepper shaker. However, in case the Devil who guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame. If I have horns to make me mad, then let the proverb go with me: I’ll be horn-mad.”

Mr. Ford thought that he was a cuckold, but he did not want to say the word, and so he said phrases such as “Though what I am I cannot avoid” and “yet to be what I would not.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

On a public street stood Mrs. Page, Mistress Quickly, and William Page, the Pages' young son, who was studying Latin, as even very young pupils did at that time.

Speaking about Falstaff, Mrs. Page asked Mistress Quickly, "Do you think that he is already at Mrs. Ford's house?"

"I am sure that he is by this time, or will be immediately, but, truly, he is very outrageously angry about being thrown into the water. Mrs. Ford wants you to go to her right away."

Mrs. Page replied, "I'll be with her very soon; first I need to take my young man here to school."

She looked up and said, "Look, his schoolmaster — Sir Hugh — is coming; I see that today is a playing day — a holiday from school."

Because Sir Hugh was a university-educated priest, he was the schoolmaster in Windsor.

She said, "How are you, Sir Hugh? Is there no school today?"

"No, there is no school," Sir Hugh replied. "Mr. Slender has requested that I allow the boys to play today."

"God bless him," Mistress Quickly said.

Mrs. Page said, "Sir Hugh, my husband says my son is not learning anything at all in school. Please, ask him some questions about his knowledge of Latin."

"Come here, William," Sir Hugh said. "Hold up your head; come here."

"Come on, son," Mrs. Page said. "Hold up your head; answer your teacher, and don't be afraid."

With his Welsh accent, Sir Hugh asked, "William, how many numbers is in nouns?"

"Two."

William was correct: the two numbers were singular and plural.

Latin is a language that has inflections according to number and case. The inflections are changes in the form of the word that reveal information such as whether the noun is singular or plural. The inflections also reveal whether a noun is in the nominative, genitive, accusative, ablative, or vocative case.

Mistress Quickly, who knew no Latin, said, "Truly, I thought there had been one number more because they say, 'God's nouns.'"

She was mistaken. People sometimes referred to God's 'ounds, or wounds, not God's nouns. Also, Jesus suffered five wounds on the cross, not three. He was wounded in his side, his hands, and his feet.

“Peace your tattlings!” Sir Hugh said to Mistress Quickly; he meant, “Be quiet!”

He then asked, “What is ‘fair,’ William?”

William gave the Latin word for “fair,” aka “beautiful”: “*Pulcher*.”

Mistress Quickly misunderstood: “Polecats! There are fairer things than polecats, surely.”

Polecats were regarded as vermin; in addition, the word “polecat” was a slang term for a prostitute.

“You are a very simplicity ’oman [simple-minded woman],” Sir Hugh said to her. “Please, be quiet.”

He then asked, “What is *lapis*, William?”

William correctly translated the Latin word “*lapis*”: “A stone.”

“And what is ‘a stone,’ William?”

“A pebble.”

Here, William answered incorrectly. Sir Hugh had wanted William to translate the English word “stone” into Latin.

Sir Hugh said, “No, it is *lapis*. Please, remember in your prain [brain].”

William said, “*Lapis*.”

“That is a good William,” Sir Hugh said. “What is he, William, who does lend articles?”

Articles are words such as “this” and “that.”

William had memorized the answer from his Latin book and quoted it word for word: “Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined, *Singulariter, nominativo, hic, haec, hoc*.”

*Singulariter* means “in the singular,” *nominativo* means “in the nominative case.”

*Hic, haec, hoc* are all Latin words meaning “this.” *Hic* is masculine; *haec* is feminine; and *hoc* is neuter.

Sir Hugh said in his Welsh accent, “*Nominativo, hig, hag, hog*. Please, listen: *genitivo, hujus*. Well, what is your accusative case?”

*Genitivo* means “in the genitive case; *hujus* means “of this.”

William replied, “*Accusativo, hinc*.”

*Accusativo* means “in the accusative case.” However, William erred when he answered *hinc*; he should have answered *hunc*.

Sir Hugh corrected him: “Please, have your remembrance, child, accusative, *hung, hang, hog* [*hunc, hanc, hoc*].”

Mistress Quickly said, “‘Hang-hog’ is Latin for bacon, I bet.”

Bacon is hung and then smoked and preserved. A story was told about a prisoner named Hog who once tried to get out of being hung by saying that he was related to a VIP named Sir Nicholas Bacon, who replied that the prisoner and he could not be related unless the prisoner was hanged because Hog does not become Bacon until it is hanged.

Sir Hugh said, "Leave your prabbles [prattling brabbles, aka trivial words], 'oman."

He then asked, "What is the *focative* case, William?"

By "the *focative* case," Sir Hugh meant "the vocative case."

"O — *vocativo*, O," William replied. In a way, William was correct. When you address someone by name in Latin, you are using the vocative case.

This is a translation of a name in the vocative case from Latin to English: "Oh, William."

Sir Hugh said, "Remember, William; *focative* is *caret*."

*Caret* is Latin for "It is lacking." Sir Hugh meant that although names can be in the vocative case, the articles *hic*, *haec*, *hoc* lack a vocative case.

Mistress Quickly, who heard the Latin word "*caret*" but understood it to be the English word "carrot," said, "And that's a good root."

Anyone with a bawdy sense of humor who heard the conversation could have had a good laugh. Sir Hugh's pronunciation of *focative* called to mind a four-letter English word that began with *f* and ended with *k*. An "O" was a letter that was then used to refer to a vagina. And "carrot" was a word then used to refer to a penis.

Sir Hugh said to Mistress Quickly, "Stop speaking, 'oman."

Mrs. Page added, "Quiet!"

Sir Hugh asked, "What is your genitive case plural, William?"

"Genitive case?" William asked.

"Yes."

William answered, "Genitive — *horum*, *harum*, *horum*."

He had answered correctly, but Mistress Quickly, who knew no Latin, was shocked. She understood "genitive case" to mean "Jenny's case." Prostitutes were called by diminutive names such as Jenny, and the word "case" was then used to refer to a vagina. In addition, she heard the Latin word "*horum*" and thought that she was hearing the English word "whore."

Mistress Quickly said, "God's vengeance on Jenny's case! Darn her! Never say her name, child, if she is a whore."

Sir Hugh said, "For shame, 'oman."

Mistress Quickly defended herself: "You do ill to teach the child such words."

She said to Mrs. Page, "He teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do fast enough by themselves."

To “hick” is to hiccup after drinking excessively, and to “hack” is to fornicate.

Mistress Quickly said to Sir Hugh, “And to say the word *horum!* Shame on you!”

Sir Hugh replied, “Are you lunatics, ’oman? Have you no understandings for your cases and the numbers of the genders? You are as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.”

“Please, be quiet,” Mrs. Page said to Mistress Quickly.

Sir Hugh said, “Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.”

“I have forgotten that,” William said.

“It is *qui, quae, quod,*” Sir Hugh said. “If you forget your *quies*, your *quaes*, and your *quods*, you must be preeches.”

By “preeches,” Sir Hugh meant “breeched” — William would be spanked after his britches were pulled down.

Sir Hugh then said to William, “Go your ways, and play; go.”

“He is a better scholar than I thought he was,” Mrs. Page said.

“He is a good sprag [alert, clever] memory,” Sir Hugh said. “Farewell, Mrs. Page.”

“*Adieu*, good Sir Hugh.”

Sir Hugh departed.

Mrs. Page said to her son, “Let’s go home, boy. Come, we stay here too long.”

— 4.2 —

Falstaff and Mrs. Ford were speaking in a room in the Fords’ house.

Falstaff said, “Mrs. Ford, your sorrow has eaten up and taken away my suffering. I see that you return my love, and I declare to you that I match your love exactly — not only, Mrs. Ford, in the simple act and office of love, but in everything that accompanies it — the proper apparel, accompaniment, and ceremony. But are you sure that your husband is away now?”

“He’s hunting birds, sweet Sir John,” Mrs. Ford said.

Outside the house, Mrs. Page called, “Hello, friend! Are you home?”

Mrs. Ford said, “Step into this room and stay out of sight, Sir John.”

Falstaff went into the other room.

Mrs. Page entered the house and said, “How are you now, sweetheart? Who’s at home besides yourself?”

“Why, no one but my own servants.”

“Indeed!”

“I have told you the truth,” Mrs. Ford said.

She whispered to Mrs. Page, “Speak louder so that Falstaff can hear you.”

“Truly,” Mrs. Page replied, speaking loudly, “I am so glad you have nobody else here.”

“Why?”

“Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunatic mind again,” Mrs. Page replied. “He so takes on yonder with my husband; he so rails against all married mankind, he so curses all Eve’s daughters of whatsoever temperament, and he so hits himself on the forehead, crying, ‘Show yourself! Show yourself!’ that any madness I have ever before beheld in him now seems only tameness, civility, and patience compared to this distemper he is in now.”

When Mr. Ford hit his forehead and yelled, “Show yourself! Show yourself!” he was referring to the metaphorical cuckold’s horns that he felt that his wife had given to him.

Mrs. Page said, “I am glad the fat knight is not here.”

“Why, does my husband talk about Falstaff?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“He talks about no one but him; and he swears that Falstaff was carried out of your house in a basket the last time he searched for him. He protests to my husband that Falstaff is now here, and he has drawn my husband and the rest of their company from their hunting of birds to see whether his suspicion is correct. I am glad that the knight is not here; now your husband shall see how foolish his suspicions are.”

“How near is my husband, Mrs. Page?”

“Very near. He is at the end of the street. He will be here almost immediately.”

“I am ruined!” Mrs. Ford said. “The knight is here.”

“Why, then you are utterly shamed, and he will soon be a dead man. What a woman are you! Send him away! Send him away! Better shame than murder! You will be shamed, but if he escapes, he will avoid being murdered!”

“How can he get out of here? How can I hide him? Shall I put him into the buck-basket again?”

Falstaff came out of hiding and said, “No, I will not hide again in the basket. Can’t I leave before he arrives here?”

Mrs. Page said, “No. Alas, three of Mr. Ford’s brothers are watching the door. They are carrying pistols so that no one can go out the door; otherwise, you might slip away before he came. But what are you doing here?”

Ignoring that question, Falstaff said, “What shall I do? I know. I’ll creep up into the chimney.”

Mrs. Ford said, “Mr. Ford and his hunting partners always fire their birding guns up the chimney. It is a safe way to ensure that they are not loaded. I know where you can hide: Creep into the kiln.”

The kiln was where the cooking took place.

“Where is it?” Falstaff asked.

“My husband will look there, I swear,” Mrs. Ford said. “He will look everywhere: cupboards, coffers, chests, trunks, wells, vaults. He knows all the places where a man can hide, and he will

search all of them. Falstaff, you cannot hide in this house.”

“I’ll go out of the house then.”

“If you go out of this house, you die, Sir John,” Mrs. Page said. “Unless you go out disguised \_\_\_”

“How can we disguise him?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“I don’t know!” Mrs. Page said. “There is no woman’s gown big enough for him to put on as a disguise; otherwise, he might put on a hat, a muffler around his throat, and a kerchief on his head under his hat, and so escape.”

“Good hearts, devise some kind of disguise,” Falstaff said. “Better an inconvenience rather than a calamity.”

“My maid’s aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a dress upstairs,” Mrs. Ford said.

“I give my word that the dress will fit him,” Mrs. Page said. “She’s as big as he is: and there’s her fringed hat and her muffler, too. Run upstairs and put on her dress, Sir John.”

“Go, go, sweet Sir John. Mrs. Page and I will look for a kerchief you can put on your head.”

“Quickly, quickly!” Mrs. Page said. “We’ll come and help disguise you very soon. In the meanwhile, put on the dress.”

Falstaff went upstairs to put on the dress.

“I wish that my husband would see Falstaff in this disguise,” Mrs. Ford said. “He cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears that she’s a witch and he has forbidden her to enter my house and has threatened to beat her.”

“May Heaven guide Falstaff to your husband’s cudgel, and may the Devil guide his cudgel afterwards!”

“But is my husband really coming?”

“In all seriousness, yes,” Mrs. Page said, “and he talks about the buck-basket, too, but I do not know how he learned about that.”

“We’ll make use of the buck-basket again,” Mrs. Ford said. “I’ll tell my manservants to carry the buck-basket again so that they will meet my husband at the door with it, as they did last time.”

“Your husband will be here very soon,” Mrs. Page said. “Let’s go dress Falstaff like the witch of Brentford.”

“I’ll first give my manservants orders about what they shall do with the buck-basket. Go up to Falstaff; I’ll bring him a kerchief for his head very quickly.”

Mrs. Ford departed.

Mrs. Page said to herself, “Hang Falstaff, that dishonest varlet! We cannot treat him badly enough. We’ll leave a proof, by that which we will do, that wives may be merry, and yet be honest, too. We do not commit adultery although we often jest and laugh. Remember the old,

but true, proverb: Quiet swine eat all the pigswill. The pig that is quiet is the one that is actually feeding.”

She went upstairs.

Mrs. Ford came back with two manservants.

“Go, sirs, take the buck-basket again on your shoulders. Your master is almost at the door; if he orders you to set it down, obey him. Quickly, do it.”

She went upstairs.

The first manservant said, “Come, come, lift it up.”

The second manservant said, “Pray to Heaven that it is not full of knight again.”

“I hope that it is not,” the first manservant said. “I would rather carry a buck-basket filled with lead.”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh entered the room.

Mr. Ford said, “If my suspicions prove to be wrong, I will look like a fool, true. But if my suspicions prove to be true and I allow my wife to commit adultery through my negligence, do you have any way to make me not a fool again?”

Mr. Ford ordered the manservants, “Set down the basket, villains! Somebody call my wife. Is there a youth — a fortunate lover — in this buck-basket? Oh, you panderly rascals — you act like panders! There’s a knot of men, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy against me. Now shall the truth be revealed and the Devil shamed. Remember this proverb: Tell the truth and shame the Devil!”

No one had called his wife, so Mr. Ford did it: “Hello, wife, I say! Come, come here! Look at these honest clothes you sent forth to be bleached!”

Mr. Page said, “Why, this surpasses belief, Mr. Ford; this is incredible. You ought not to be allowed loose any longer; you ought to be tied up like a madman.”

“Why, this is lunatics!” Sir Hugh said. “This is as mad as a mad dog!”

Justice Shallow said, “Indeed, Mr. Ford, this is not well, indeed.”

“I agree, sir,” Mr. Ford replied.

Mrs. Ford entered the room.

Mr. Ford said, “Come here, Mrs. Ford: Mrs. Ford the honest and faithful woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, who has a jealous fool for her husband! I suspect without cause, Mrs. Ford, do I?”

“Heaven be my witness that you do,” Mrs. Ford said, “if you suspect me in any dishonesty and if you suspect that I have been unfaithful to you in any way.”

“Well said, brazen-face!” Mr. Ford said. “Keep it up.”

He then started pulling clothing out of the buck-bucket as he said, “Come out of there, damn you!”

“This surpasses everything!” Mr. Page said.

“Are you not ashamed?” Mrs. Ford said. “Let the clothes alone!”

“I shall find you,” Mr. Ford said as he searched the basket.

“It is unreasonable!” Sir Hugh said. “Will you take up your wife’s clothes? Come away.”

Sir Hugh was being unintentionally bawdy. Someone with an indelicate sense of humor could interpret Sir Hugh’s words as asking, “Will you take up your wife’s dress so you can have sex with her?”

“Empty the basket, I say!” Mr. Ford ordered.

“Why, man, why?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“Mr. Page, as I am a man, I swear that a man was conveyed out of my house yesterday in this buck-basket. Why may he not be there again? I am sure that he is somewhere in my house. My source of information is true; my jealousy is reasonable.”

He ordered again, “Pull all the clothing out of the buck-basket.”

“If you find a man there, he shall die a flea’s death,” Mrs. Ford said. “He will have to be as small as a flea to hide there, and I shall squish him between my forefinger and my thumb.”

“No man is hiding in that basket,” Mr. Page said.

“By my fidelity [faith], this is not well, Mr. Ford,” Justice Shallow said. “This disgraces you.”

Sir Hugh said, “Mr. Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart: This is jealousies.”

“Well, the man I am looking for is not here in the buck-basket,” Mr. Ford said.

“No, nor anywhere else but in your brain,” Mr. Page said.

“Help me to search my house one more time,” Mr. Ford said. “If I do not find what I am seeking, suggest no excuse for my extreme behavior, but instead joke about me at your dinner-table. Let everyone use me in comparisons: ‘As jealous as Ford, who searched inside a hollow walnut for his wife’s lover.’ Help me once more; once more search my house with me.”

Mrs. Ford called upstairs, “Mrs. Page! You and the old woman come downstairs; my husband will come into the bedchamber.”

“Old woman!” Mr. Ford said. “What old woman is that?”

“She is my maid’s aunt of Brentford.”

“She is a witch, a hussy, an old and cheating hussy! Haven’t I forbid her to enter my house? She comes on errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what’s brought to pass in the name of fortune telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure — wax effigies, pentagrams, and astrological horoscopes — and other such pretenses that are beyond our understanding and about which we know nothing!”

He called, “Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down here, I say!”

“No, please, good, sweet husband!” Mrs. Ford said.

She added, “Good gentlemen, don’t allow him to strike the old woman.”

Falstaff, now dressed in women’s clothing, and Mrs. Page entered the room.

Mrs. Page said, “Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.”

“I’ll prat her,” Mrs. Ford said.

He hit Falstaff several times and yelled, “Out of my door, you witch, you hag, you baggage, you polecat, you bad woman! Out, out! I’ll conjure you, I’ll fortune-tell you.”

Falstaff ran out the door.

“Are you not ashamed?” Mrs. Page said. “I think you have killed the poor woman.”

Mrs. Ford said, “He is willing to kill her.”

She said sarcastically to her husband, “You ought to be proud of yourself.”

“Hang her, the witch!” Mr. Ford said.

“By the yea and no, I think the ’oman is a witch indeed,” Sir Hugh said. “I like not when a ’oman has a great peard [beard]; I spy a great peard [beard] under his muffler. Witches have peards.”

“Will you follow me, gentlemen?” Mr. Ford asked. “I ask you to please follow me. See if my jealousy has a cause. If I am crying ‘Wolf’ falsely now, then do not listen to me if I ever cry ‘Wolf’ again.”

“Let’s humor him a little further,” Mr. Page said. “Come, gentlemen.”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh went upstairs.

Mrs. Page said, “Believe me, your husband beat Falstaff most pitifully.”

Mrs. Ford replied, “No, I swear by the Mass that he did not — he beat him most unpitifully, I believe.”

“I’ll have the cudgel he used hallowed — sanctified — and hung over the altar,” Mrs. Page said. “It has done meritorious service.”

“What do you think?” Mrs. Ford asked. “May we, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue Falstaff with any further revenge? Are we justified in punishing him further?”

“The spirit of wantonness is, I am sure, scared out of him,” Mrs. Page said. “Unless the Devil completely owns him with no possibility of redemption, Falstaff will never again, I think, seek to sully us by attempting to commit adultery with us.”

“Shall we tell our husbands how we have tricked and punished Falstaff?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“Yes, by all means; if for no other reason than to scrape the jealous imaginings out of your husband’s brains. If they can find in their hearts that the poor unvirtuous fat knight should be any further afflicted, the two of us will continue to administer justice to him.”

“I’ll bet that they will have him publicly shamed,” Mrs. Ford said. “I think that would be the best and most fitting conclusion to the jest. Falstaff deserves to be publicly shamed.”

“Come, let us go to the forge then and shape our next plan for revenge,” Mrs. Page said. “I would not have things cool.”

— 4.3 —

In a room of the Garter Inn, Bardolph said to the Host, “Sir, the Germans desire to have the use of three of your horses: The Duke himself will be tomorrow at the court, and they are going to meet him.”

“What Duke is he who is coming so secretly?” the Host said. “I have heard nothing about a Duke being at the court tomorrow. Let me speak with the gentlemen. Do they speak English?”

“Yes, sir,” Bardolph said. “I’ll call them to come and speak to you.”

“They shall use my horses,” the Host said, “but I’ll make them pay; I’ll sauce them and charge them a lot. They reserved rooms at my inn for a week, and I have turned away other guests. They must pay a lot; I’ll overcharge them. Come with me.”

— 4.4 —

Mr. and Mrs. Page, Mr. and Mrs. Ford, and Sir Hugh were talking together in a room in the Fords’ house. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page had shown their husbands the letters that Falstaff had written to them.

“It is one of the best discretions of a ’oman as ever I did look upon,” Sir Hugh said.

He meant that Mrs. Ford was one of the most sensible and discreet women that he had ever seen.

Mr. Page asked, “And did he send you both these letters at the same time?”

Mrs. Page replied, “Within a quarter of an hour.”

“Pardon me, wife,” Mr. Ford said. “Henceforth do what you will; I will suspect the Sun of being cold before I will suspect you of being wanton and unfaithful. Now my honor stands in me as firm as faith, although recently I was a heretic.”

“This is good,” Mr. Page said. “This is good, but no more, please. Be not as extreme in apologizing for an offense as you were in committing the offense.”

“But let our plot go forward. Let our wives once more, to make public entertainment for us, appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow at a place where we may find him and disgrace him for what he has wanted to do.”

“There is no better way or plan than the one they spoke of,” Mr. Ford said.

“I don’t know,” Mr. Page said. “They will send him word that they’ll meet him in the park at midnight? Nonsense! He’ll never come.”

“You say he has been thrown in the rivers and has been grievously peaten [beaten] as an old ’oman,” Sir Hugh said. “I think there should be terrors in him that he should not come; methinks that since his flesh is punished, he shall have no desires to come.”

“I think so, too,” Mr. Page said.

“Plan how you’ll treat Falstaff when he comes,” Mrs. Ford said, “and let us two devise how to bring him there.”

Mrs. Page said, “There is an old tale that Herne the Hunter, who was once a forester here in Windsor Forest, all throughout the winter, at midnight, walks round about an oak while wearing great jagged horns, and there he blights the tree and takes the cattle and makes milk cows yield blood and shakes a chain in a most hideous and dreadful manner.

“You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know the superstitious idle-headed elders of long ago learned and passed down to our times this tale of Herne the Hunter as a true tale.”

“Why, even now many people are afraid in the deep of night to walk by Herne’s Oak,” Mr. Page said. “But what about this?”

“We have a plan,” Mrs. Ford said. “We want to entice Falstaff to meet us at that oak. He will be disguised as Herne and have huge horns on his head.”

“Well, let us suppose that he shows up,” Mr. Page said. “Let us also suppose that he is disguised as Herne the Hunter with horns on his head. Once he is there, what shall be done with and to him? What is your plot?”

“We have thought about that, too,” Mrs. Page said. “Nan Page my daughter and my little son and three or four more of their age and size we’ll dress like elves, the children of elves, and fairies with rounds of waxen candles on their heads, and rattles in their hands. Suddenly, as Falstaff, Mrs. Ford, and I are newly met, let them come out of a sawpit where timber is sawed and rush at us as they sing some wild and confused song. When we see them, Mrs. Ford and I in great amazedness will run away. Then they will all encircle him round about and, fairy-like, pinch the unclean knight, and ask him why, at that hour of fairy revel, in their so sacred paths he dares to tread in such a profane shape.”

“And until he tells the truth,” Mrs. Ford said, “the pretend fairies will pinch him without stopping and burn him with their candles.”

“Once the truth is known,” Mrs. Page said, “we’ll all present ourselves, take off his horns, and laugh at him all the way back home to Windsor.”

Mr. Ford said, “The children must be taught well how to do this, and they must practice, or they won’t be able to do it.”

“I will teach the children their behaviors,” Sir Hugh said, “and I will be like a jack-an-apes — an evil spirit — also, to burn the knight with my candle.”

“That will be excellent,” Mr. Ford said. “I’ll go and buy them masks.”

Mrs. Page said, “My Nan shall be the Fairy Queen, and she will be finely attired in a robe of white.”

“I will go and buy white silk,” Mr. Page said.

He thought, *I also have formed a plan. During the night, Mr. Slender will steal away with Nan, my daughter, and take her to the nearby village of Eton and marry her.*

He said out loud, "Send a message to Falstaff right away."

Mr. Ford said, "I will disguise myself again as Brook and go to him. He will tell me what he intends to do. I am sure that he will come."

"Don't you worry about that," Mrs. Page said. "Go and get us everything we need for our fairies."

"Let us get going," Sir Hugh said. "It is admirable pleasures and fery [very] honest knaveries."

Mr. Page, Mr. Ford, and Sir Hugh exited.

Mrs. Page said, "Go, Mrs. Ford. Send a message quickly to Sir John, so that we know what he plans to do."

Mrs. Ford exited.

Mrs. Page said to herself, "I'll go to Doctor Caius. He has my good will, and I want no one but him to marry my daughter, Nan Page. That Slender, although he owns lots of land, is an idiot; my husband likes Slender best of all my daughter's suitors.

"Doctor Caius is well moneyed, and his friends are powerful at court. He, none but he, shall marry my daughter even though twenty thousand men worthier than him should want to marry her."

— 4.5 —

In a room in the Garter Inn, the Host was talking with Simple, Slender's servant. The Host was in a good mood and using extravagant language. He was also willing to have fun at the expense of Simple.

"What would you have, boor?" the Host asked. "What, thick-skin! Speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap."

"Sir, I have come to speak with Sir John Falstaff," Simple said. "Master Slender has sent me to speak to Sir John."

The Host pointed upstairs and said, "There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed and the truckle-bed that can be stored under it. Falstaff's room has been freshly and newly painted with the story of the Prodigal Son. Go knock and call him. May Hell speak like an Anthropophaginian to you. Knock, I say."

An Anthropophaginian is a cannibal, aka man-eater. The Host was joking that Falstaff, if he were irritated by being interrupted, might bite Simple's head off.

"There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into Falstaff's bedchamber," Simple said. "I'll be so bold as to stay, sir, until she come down; indeed, I come to speak with her, not him."

"Ha! A fat woman!" the Host said. "The knight may be robbed — I'll call for him."

He shouted, "Bully knight! Bully Sir John! Speak from your lungs military. Are you there? It is your Host, your Ephesian, who is calling for you."

By "Ephesian," the Host meant "jolly companion."

“How are you, my Host?” Falstaff called from upstairs.

“Here’s a Bohemian-Tartar who is waiting until the fat woman with you comes down,” the Host replied. “Let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honorable. Do not expect privacy in which to do immoral acts here.”

A Bohemian-Tartar is a Tartar from Bohemia — the Host’s humorous way of referring to Simple.

Falstaff walked down the stairs and said, “There was, my Host, an old fat woman just now with me; but she’s gone.”

“Please, sir,” Simple said, “wasn’t she the wise woman of Brentford?”

A wise woman is a woman who is skilled in occult matters.

“Suppose it was, mussel shell,” Falstaff said.

Simple’s mouth was habitually open, and his mind was habitually empty; these two characteristics also apply to one mussel shell.

Falstaff continued, “What do you want with her?”

“My master, sir, Master Slender, seeing her walking through the streets, sent me to her to learn, sir, whether one Nym, sir, who cheated him out of a necklace, still had the necklace or not.”

“I spoke with the old woman about it,” Falstaff said.

“And what did she say, please, sir?”

“She says that the very same man who cheated Master Slender of his chain cozened him of it.”

“Cozened” is a word that means “cheated.”

“I wish that I could have spoken with the woman herself,” Simple said. “I had other things that my master, Master Slender, wanted me to speak to her about.”

“What are they?” Falstaff asked. “Let us know.”

“Yes,” the Host said. “Answer quickly.”

“I may not conceal them, sir,” Simple replied. He meant “reveal,” not “conceal,” but the Host joked, “Conceal them, or you die.”

“Why, sir, they were only about Miss Anne Page,” Simple said. “My master wanted to know if it is his fortune to have her or not.”

“It is,” Falstaff said. “It is his fortune.”

“To what, sir?” Simple asked.

“To have her, or not,” Falstaff replied. “Go; tell Slender the fat woman told me that.”

“May I be so bold as to say so, sir?” Simple asked.

“Yes, sir,” Falstaff said, “as if anyone could be more bold.”

“I thank your worship,” Simple replied. “I shall make my master glad with these tidings.”

Simple exited.

“You are clerkly, you are clerkly, Sir John,” the Host replied. “You are a scholar. Was there a wise woman with you?”

“Yes, there was, my Host,” Falstaff replied. “She was one who taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life, and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.”

Falstaff was saying that he had learned something from the recent escapade in which he had dressed as a woman. Mr. Ford had paid Falstaff to learn — blows were Falstaff’s payment.

Bardolph entered the room and said, “Out, alas, sir! Cozenage, mere cozenage! Cheating, and nothing but cheating!”

Bardolph had ridden with the three Germans who were supposed to be using the Host’s horses to ride to the court. He had been riding on a pillion: a cushion behind a saddle for an additional rider.

“Where are my horses?” the Host asked. “Speak well of them, *varletto*.”

*Varletto* was the Host’s Italianized word for “varlet.” The Host did not want Bardolph to say that the thieves, aka cozeners, had run off with the horses.

“The horses have run away with the cozeners,” Bardolph replied. “As soon as we arrived beyond Eton, they threw me off from behind one of them, in a slough of mire; and they used their spurs and rode quickly away, like three German Devils, three Doctor Faustuses.”

“They have gone only to meet the Duke, villain,” the Host said. “Do not say that they have fled; Germans are honest men.”

Sir Hugh entered the room and asked, “Where is the Host?”

“What is the matter, sir?” the Host asked.

“Have a care of your entertainments,” Sir Hugh said.

By “entertainments,” he meant “those whom you entertain, aka guests in the inn.

Sir Hugh continued, “There is a friend of mine come to town tells me there is three cozen-Germans that has cozened all the hosts of Reading, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you: You are wise and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks [flouting-stocks, aka laughing-stocks], and it is not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well.”

“Cozen” meant both “cousin, aka kinsmen or relatives” and “cozening, aka cheating.”

Sir Hugh exited the room, and Doctor Caius entered it.

He asked, “Vere [Where] is mine [my] Host de Jarteer [Garter]?”

“Here, Mister Doctor,” the Host replied, “in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.”

“I cannot tell vat is dat,” Doctor Caius said, “but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany [from Germany]. By my trot [Truly], dere is no duke dat the court is

know to come. I tell you for good vill [will]. *Adieu.*”

He exited.

The Host ordered Bardolph, “Raise the hue and cry, villain, and we will go after the thieves! Assist me, knight. I am undone! Fly, run, hue and cry, villain! I am undone!”

The Host and Bardolph exited.

Falstaff said to himself, “I wish that all the world might be cheated because I have been cheated — and beaten, too. If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed and how my transformation has been washed when I hid in the buck-basket and cudgeled when I disguised myself as a fat woman, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop and liquor fishermen’s boots with me so that the boots would be waterproof. I bet that they would whip me with their fine wits until I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I have not prospered ever since I cheated at the card game primero, got caught, and lied about cheating. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.”

Mistress Quickly entered the room.

Falstaff asked, “From where have you come?”

“From the two parties, truly,” Mistress Quickly replied.

Of course, she meant that Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford had sent her to Falstaff.

“The Devil take one party and his dam — his mother — the other!” Falstaff said, “and so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villainous inconstancy of man’s disposition — the weakness of man — is able to bear.”

“And haven’t they suffered?” Mistress Quickly said. “Yes, indeed they have — speciously [Mistress Quickly meant “especially”] one of them. Mrs. Ford, good heart, has been beaten black and blue — you cannot see a white spot on her skin.”

“Why are telling you me about black and blue?” Falstaff asked. “I was beaten myself into all the colors of the rainbow; and I was almost arrested as the witch of Brentford. If my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the movements of an old woman, had not saved me, the knave constable would have set me in the stocks — in the common stocks — as a witch.”

“Sir, let me speak with you in your bedchamber,” Mistress Quickly said. “You shall hear how things go; and, I promise you, you will be content. Here is a letter that will help explain things. Good hearts, what trouble it is to bring you together! Surely, one of you has not served Heaven well, or else you would not be so crossed.”

“Come up into my bedchamber,” Falstaff said.

— 4.6 —

Fenton and the Host talked together in a room of the Garter Inn.

The Host, who was normally a jovial fellow, was depressed. He said, “Mr. Fenton, don’t talk to me; my mind is heavy. I will give up trying to help you marry Anne Page.”

“Listen to me for a moment,” Fenton said. “Assist me and help me marry Anne Page, and I will give you a hundred pounds in gold more than you lost when the three Germans stole your horses.”

“I will listen to you, Mr. Fenton,” the Host said, “and I will at the least keep secret what you tell me.”

“From time to time I have acquainted you with the dear love I have for fair Anne Page, who has returned my affection as much as she has been allowed to. Her love for me makes me happy. I have a letter from her with such content as will make you wonder. It has mirth that is so intermixed with my desire to marry her that mirth and important matter cannot be separated. Fat Falstaff will take a big role in a great scene: I will reveal to you what that role and scene are — it will be a great jest.

“Listen, my good Host. Tonight at Herne’s Oak, between twelve and one o’clock, my sweet Nan is supposed to play the role of the Fairy Queen. The reason why is here in this letter. While she is in this disguise, and while other jests are abundantly going on, her father has commanded her to slip away with Slender and go with him to Eton where they shall be immediately married. She has told her father that she will obey him.

“But, sir, her mother, ever strongly against Slender marrying Miss Anne, and always strongly for Doctor Caius marrying Miss Anne, has arranged that Doctor Caius will spirit her away while other entertainments are keeping everyone busy. There at the deanery, where a priest attends, Doctor Caius is supposed to immediately marry her. Anne has pretended to consent to her mother’s plot and has told Doctor Caius that she will marry him.

“This is the way things stand now. Anne’s father intends for her to be the only one dressed in white, and at the appropriate time Slender will take her by the hand and tell her to go with him, and they shall leave to be married.

“Anne’s mother intends for her to be the only one dressed in green. The colors are important because everyone will be wearing masks and costumes. Doctor Caius will recognize her by the green gown she is wearing. She will also have ribbons hanging from her head and blowing in the wind. At the appropriate time Doctor Caius will pinch her on the hand and tell her to go with him, and they shall leave to be married. Anne has told him that she will go with him.”

The Host asked, “Whom does Anne intend to deceive: her father or her mother?”

Fenton replied, “Both, my good Host. She intends to go with me and marry me. And here is what is needed: You will talk to the vicar and have him wait for us at the church between twelve and one. There he shall marry Anne and me to give our hearts united ceremony.”

“Well, do your part in the plot properly and husband your resources,” the Host said. “I’ll go and talk to the vicar. You bring the maiden; you shall not lack a priest.”

“I shall evermore be bound to you,” Fenton said. “Right now, I will give you some monetary compensation.”

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

Falstaff and Mistress Quickly were finishing their conversation.

Falstaff said, “Please, no more prattling; go. I’ll keep my promise. This is the third time I have arranged an assignation; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away I go. They say there is divinity in odd numbers, whether in nativity, chance, or death. Away!”

Some people thought that odd numbers were lucky. It was supposed to be good luck to be born or to die or to undertake a venture on an odd-numbered day.

“I will get a chain for you, and I’ll do what I can to get you a pair of horns,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Away, I say; time is passing,” Falstaff said. “Hold up your head, and mince.”

He meant for Mistress Quickly to walk away like a lady, with her head held high as she took little steps.

Mistress Quickly exited.

Mr. Ford, in disguise as Mr. Brook, entered Falstaff’s room.

Falstaff said, “How are you, Mr. Brook! Mr. Brook, the result of what we have planned will be known tonight, or never. We shall know whether Mr. Ford’s wife will commit adultery. Be in the Park about midnight, at Herne’s Oak, and you shall see wonders.”

“Didn’t you visit her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had arranged?”

“I went to her and visited her, Mr. Brook, as you see me, like a poor old man, but I came from her, Mr. Brook, like a poor old woman. Mr. Brook, that same knave Ford, her husband, had the finest mad Devil fit of jealousy in him that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you what happened: He beat me grievously, when I was in the shape of a woman; for when I am in the shape of man, Mr. Brook, I do not even fear Goliath whose spear shaft was as big as a weaver’s beam; because I also know that life is a shuttle.”

Falstaff had a good knowledge of the Bible.

1 Samuel 17:7 stated, “*And the shaft of his [Goliath’s] spear was like a weaver’s beam: and his spear head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.*”

Job 7.6 stated, “*My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they are spent without hope.*”

Falstaff continued, “I am in haste; go along with me. I’ll tell you everything, Mr. Brook. Since I plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, I never knew what it was to be beaten until lately.”

Falstaff was saying that he had not been beaten since he was a boy. As a boy, he had done such things as play with tops and pull a feather from a living goose. At school, he had played truant and been whipped for it.

Falstaff continued, “Come with me, and I’ll tell you strange things about this knave Ford, on whom tonight I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hands. Come with me. Strange things are at hand, Mr. Brook! Come with me.”

— 5.2 —

At Herne’s Oak in Windsor Park, Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender were talking.

Mr. Page said, “Come, come; we’ll lie hidden in the ditch running alongside Windsor Castle until we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter —”

Slender interrupted, “Yes, truly. I have spoken with her and we have a password so we can know one another. She will wear white, I will come to her and cry ‘mum,’ she will reply ‘budget,’ and so we shall know each other.”

A mumbudget is the opposite of a fussbudget. A mumbudget is quiet, while a fussbudget constantly complains.

“That’s good, too,” Justice Shallow said, “but why do you need either your ‘mum’ or her ‘budget?’ She will be the only one wearing white, and so that is enough to know her.”

A clock tolled, and Justice Shallow said, “It is ten o’clock.”

Mr. Page said, “The night is dark; light and spirits will become it well. May Heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil but the Devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let’s go; follow me.”

— 5.3 —

Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, and Doctor Caius talked on a street in Windsor.

Mrs. Page said, “Doctor Caius, my daughter is dressed in green. At the appropriate time, take her by the hand, lead her away to the deanery, and marry her quickly. Go now into the Park. Mrs. Ford and I will go there later, together.”

“I know vat [what] I have to do. *Adieu*,” Doctor Caius said.

“Fare you well, sir,” Mrs. Page said.

Doctor Caius exited.

Mrs. Page continued, “My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor’s marrying my daughter, but it does not matter; better a little chiding than a great deal of heartbreak.”

Mrs. Ford asked, “Where is Nan now and her troop of fairies, and where is Sir Hugh, who is in costume as a Welsh Devil or evil spirit?”

“They are all lying hidden in a pit near Herne’s Oak, with obscured lights. At the moment when Falstaff and we meet, they will immediately uncover their lights.”

“That will amaze and frighten him,” Mrs. Ford said.

“If he is not frightened, he will be mocked; if he is frightened, he will be mocked even more.”

“We’ll definitely deceive him,” Mrs. Ford said.

“Against such lewdsters and their lechery, those who betray them do no treachery,” Mrs. Page said.

“The hour draws on,” Mrs. Ford said. “It is almost time! To the oak! To the oak!”

— 5.4 —

Sir Hugh Evans and some others arrived near the oak. Sir Hugh was disguised as a Devil, and the others were disguised as fairies.

“Trib, trib, fairies,” Sir Hugh said. “Come; and remember your parts: be pold [bold], please; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-’ords [watch-words], do as I pid [bid] you. Come, come; trib, trib.”

By “trib,” Sir Hugh meant “trip.” To move trippingly is to move lightly and quickly.

— 5.5 —

Falstaff, disguised as Herne the Hunter, stood by himself at Herne’s Oak.

He said to himself, “The Windsor bell has struck twelve o’clock; the moment of my meeting with the Windsor wives draws near. Now, may the hot-blooded gods assist me! Remember, Jove, you turned yourself into a bull so you could sleep with Europa; love made you put on your horns. Oh, powerful love! Love, in some respects, makes a beast a man; in some other respects, love makes a man a beast. You also, Jupiter, turned yourself into a swan because of your love of Leda. Oh, omnipotent Love! A swan is not all that different from a goose. How nearly the god acquired the temperament of a silly goose! Jove’s fault was done first in the form of a beast. Oh, Jove, a beastly fault! And then another fault in the semblance of a fowl; think about it, Jove; it was a foul — or fowl — fault! When gods have hot backs and lusty loins, what shall poor men do? As for me, I am here in this forest in the form of a horned Windsor stag; and I am the fattest stag, I think, in the forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me if I piss my tallow?”

As a fat man, Falstaff sweat a lot. He was hoping for a cool night in which to perform his lovemaking; that way, he would not excessively sweat. Stags, during rutting time, lose weight as they pursue does with which to mate. People said that the stags lost weight because fat departed their bodies with their urine. Falstaff was worried that he would lose weight through the uncomfortable process of excess sweating and through peeing fat as well as urine.

He heard a noise and said, “Who comes here? My doe?”

Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page arrived.

Mrs. Ford said, “Sir John! Are you there, my deer? My male deer? My dear?”

“My doe with the black scut!” Falstaff said.

He was being bawdy. A scut is the tail of a deer. Applied to Mrs. Ford, a scut was pubic hair.

Falstaff continued, “Let the sky rain sweet potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of ‘Greensleeves,’ let it hail kissing-comfits and snow eryngoes — let there come a tempest of provocation and lustful stimulation; I will take shelter here.”

Sweet potatoes were thought to be aphrodisiacal, “Greensleeves” was a song about a man whose lady friend was unfaithful to him, kissing-comfits were candies eaten to sweeten the breath, and eryngoes were candied sea holly (also thought to be aphrodisiacal).

The night was dark, so Mrs. Ford said, “Mrs. Page has come with me, sweetheart.”

Falstaff, wearing horns like a stag, said, “Divide me like a bribed buck.”

He was referring to a stag that had been hunted and killed and now was being cut into pieces and distributed. The buck was a bribed buck because the hunters had bribed a gamekeeper to allow them to hunt the buck.

Falstaff said, “Each of you women will get a haunch.”

A haunch is a buttock, useful in the thrusting motion of lovemaking.

He continued, “I will keep my sides for myself, my shoulders for the forester who was bribed, and my horns I bequeath to your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Do I speak like Herne the Hunter?”

A woodman was a hunter; what he hunted could be game or women.

Falstaff continued, “Why, Cupid is now a child of conscience; he makes restitution. Twice before I was unsuccessful in my attempts at seduction, but now Cupid will help me succeed! As I am a true spirit, welcome!”

Noises were heard — the “fairies” were shaking their rattles.

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford pretended to be frightened.

Mrs. Page said, “What was that?”

Mrs. Ford said, “May Heaven forgive us our sins!”

“What’s going on?” Falstaff asked.

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford screamed and ran away.

“The Devil must be preventing me from committing adultery and being damned to Hell,” Falstaff said. “I think the Devil will not allow me to be damned, lest the oily fat that’s in me should set Hell on fire; otherwise, he would not oppose my desire to sin.”

Sir Hugh Evans, who was disguised as an evil spirit, and some others disguised as fairies — including one person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies — came out of the pit, carrying lit candles.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, “Fairies black, grey, green, and white, you moonshine revelers and shades of night, you orphan heirs of fixed destiny, attend to your duties and your professions.

“Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.”

Fairies are called orphans because according to tradition they do not have fathers, and they have a fixed destiny because they have duties to perform. The fairy known as Hobgoblin, for example, brings news to the fairies and cries “oyes,” which means “Hear ye” or “Listen up.”

The person disguised as Hobgoblin said, “Elves, listen for your names; silence, you airy toys. To Windsor chimneys shall leap the fairy named Cricket. If you find fires uncared for and hearths unswept, then pinch the maids as blue as blueberries. Our radiant queen hates bad housekeepers and bad housekeeping.”

Falstaff said to himself, “They are fairies; anyone who speaks to them shall die. I’ll close my eyes and lie down; no man their works must eye.”

He lay down upon his face.

The disguised Sir Hugh said, “Where’s Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid who, before she sleeps, has three times her prayers said, cause her to have pleasant dreams; she shall sleep as soundly as a carefree infant. But anyone who sleeps without having prayed for forgiveness of their sins, pinch them — pinch their arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.”

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, “Go about your business. Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out. Strew good luck, elves, on every sacred room so that it may stand until the Judgment Day, in a state as wholesome as in state it is fit, worthy the owner, and the owner it.

“The several chairs of order look you scour with juice of balm and every precious flower. Each fair installment, coat, and different crest, with loyal blazon, evermore be blest!”

In the choir of St. George’s Chapel in Windsor Castle were 24 stalls, aka places of installment, each devoted to one of the 24 Knights of the Garter. Fixed to the back of each stall was a coat of arms, and on top of each stall was the knight’s helmet and the particular heraldic device that decorated that particular knight’s helmet.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, “And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing, similar to the Garter’s circle, in a ring.”

The emblem of the Order of the Garter is a blue ribbon that forms a circle as it is worn above the knee. A garter is a narrow band of clothing that is fastened on the leg and used to keep up stockings.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, “The appearance of the fairy ring pressed on the ground, green let it be, more fertile-fresh than all the field to see.”

Fairy rings are circles on the ground that are a darker green than the other grass.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, “And *Honi soit qui mal y pense* write in emerald branches and flowers purple, blue, and white. Let sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery be buckled below fair knighthood’s bending knee. Fairies use flowers for their writing.”

*Honi soit qui mal y pense* is French for “Shame to him who thinks evil.” This is the motto of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, which was founded in 1348 by King Edward III. He picked up a lady’s garter that had accidentally fallen on the floor. Other people saw him and laughed, and he said the French words that became the motto of the order.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, “Away; disperse — but until one o’clock we must dance our dance of custom round about the Oak of Herne the Hunter. Let us not forget.”

The disguised Sir Hugh said, "Please, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set and twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be, to guide our measure — our dance — round about the tree. But, wait! I smell a man of middle-earth."

A man of middle-earth is a mortal male human being. Middle-earth is located between Heaven and Hell.

The "fairies" discovered Falstaff, who said to himself, "Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese!"

Sir Hugh retained some of his Welsh accent despite making an effort to speak without it. Falstaff, despite being frightened by the fairies, was joking about the stereotype of cheese-loving Welsh people.

The person disguised as Hobgoblin said to Falstaff, "Vile worm, you were looked over and bewitched by the evil eye even during your birth."

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, "With trial-fire touch his finger's end. If he be chaste, the flame will back descend and cause no pain; but if he reacts with pain, his is the flesh of a corrupted heart."

The person disguised as Hobgoblin said, "Let us have a trial by fire."

The disguised Sir Hugh said, "Let us see if this wood will catch fire."

Sir Hugh burned Falstaff's fingers with his candle.

Falstaff said, "Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!"

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, "He is corrupt — corrupt, and tainted in desire! Go around him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme; and, as you trip, pinch him in time with your song."

The "fairies" sang this song:

*"Down with sinful fantasy!*

*"Down with lust and lechery!*

*"Lust is but a fire in the blood,*

*"Kindled with unchaste desire,*

*"Fed in heart, whose flames aspire*

*"As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.*

*"Pinch him, all you fairies, painfully;*

*"Pinch him for his villainy;*

*"Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,*

*"Until candles and starlight and moonshine be out."*

As the “fairies” danced around Falstaff and pinched him, Doctor Caius arrived and led away a “fairy” wearing green, and Slender arrived and led away a “fairy” wearing white. Then Fenton arrived. Anne Page — who was also disguised as a fairy — went to him, and they ran away together. In the midst of all this activity, hunting horns sounded and the other “fairies” ran away a short distance. Falstaff stood up.

Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, pursued by Mr. Ford and Mr. Page, ran over to Falstaff.

Feigning anger, Mr. Page said to his wife, “No, do not run away from me. I have watched you and caught you in the act. Will no one but Herne the Hunter do for you?”

Mrs. Page replied, “Please, let’s end this jest now.”

She then said, “Now, good Sir John, how do you like the wives of Windsor?”

She added, “Do you see these horns on his head, husband? Aren’t these fair yokes better in the forest than in the town?”

Mr. Ford asked Falstaff, “Now, sir, who’s a cuckold now?”

He showed Falstaff the beard that he had used to disguise himself as Mr. Brook, and then he mimicked Falstaff’s overuse of the two words “Mr. Brook”: “Mr. Brook, Falstaff’s a knave, a cuckoldly knave. Here are his horns, Mr. Brook: and, Mr. Brook, he has enjoyed nothing of Ford’s but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid back to Mr. Brook. His horses have been legally seized until the money is paid back, Mr. Brook.”

Mrs. Ford said, “Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet and do anything naughty. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always regard you as my deer.”

“I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass,” Falstaff said.

“True, and an ox too,” Mr. Ford said. “Both the proofs are evident.”

Falstaff had been made an ass — a fool. He had also — in a way — been made an ox, aka cuckold, as shown by the horns he was wearing. The women he wanted to sleep with were sleeping with other men — their husbands.

“These are not fairies,” Falstaff said, looking at some of the children who had pretended to be fairies. “Three or four times I thought they were not fairies, and yet the guiltiness of my mind and the sudden ambush of my wits drove the obviousness of the trickery into a genuine belief — in the teeth of all rhyme and reason — that they were fairies. See now how intelligence may be made a Jack-a-Lent — a puppet for children to throw things at during Lent — when intelligence is used for ill purposes!”

Sir Hugh, who had resumed his heavy Welsh accent now that he was no longer playing a role, said, “Sir John Falstaff, serve Got [God], and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse [pinch] you.”

“Well said, fairy Hugh,” Falstaff replied.

Sir Hugh said to Mr. Ford, “And leave your jealousies, too, please.”

Mr. Ford replied, “I will never mistrust my wife again until you are able to woo her while using good English.”

Falstaff said, “Have I laid my brain in the Sun and dried it, so that it lacks intelligence to prevent so gross overreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat, too? Shall I have a coxcomb of frieze — a fool’s hat made from Welsh woolen fabric? It is time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.”

Sir Hugh said, “Seese [Cheese] is not good to give putter [butter]; your belly is all putter.”

He meant that it was not healthy for Falstaff to put cheese in his belly because his belly was made of butter — butter creates a fat belly — and it is not healthy to eat too much butter and too much cheese.

“‘Seese’ and ‘putter’!” Falstaff said. “Have I lived to stand and be taunted by one who makes fritters of English?”

Fritters are fried pieces of dough. Inside the dough are pieces of chopped-up foods such as meat or fruit.

Falstaff continued, “This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking for immoral purposes through the realm.”

“Why, Sir John,” Mrs. Page asked, “do you think that even if we would have thrust the virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders and have given ourselves without scruple to Hell, that the Devil ever could have made *you* our delight?”

Mr. Ford asked, “Could *you* be their delight? Could they delight in a sausage made out of numerous ingredients? Could they delight in a bulky bag of flax?”

Mrs. Page asked, “Could we delight in a puffed-up fat man?”

Mr. Page asked, “Could they delight in an old, cold, withered man who is made of intolerable fat guts.”

Mr. Ford asked, “Could they delight in a man who is as slanderous as Satan?”

Mr. Page asked, “Could they delight in a man who is as poor as Job?”

Mr. Ford asked, “Could they delight in a man who is as wicked as Job’s wife?”

Sir Hugh asked, “Could they delight in a man who is given to fornications, and to taverns and sack and wine and metheglins [spiced Welsh mead], and to drinkings and swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles [bribbles, aka quibbles, and brabbles, aka trivial disputes]?”

“Well, I am the theme of your mockery,” Falstaff said. “You have the better of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel who is Sir Hugh. Ignorance itself is a plummet over me. I have been so ignorant that ignorance itself is less ignorant than I am. Therefore, treat me as you will.”

Mr. Ford said, “Indeed, sir, we’ll bring you to Windsor, to one Mr. Brook, whom you have cheated of money, to whom you would have been a pander. Over and above what you have already suffered, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction to you.”

Mr. Page added, “Yet be cheerful, knight. You shall eat a posset tonight at my house.”

A posset is a drink to be drunk and is not normally regarded as a food to be eaten; however, a posset can be regarded as a food for invalids.

Mr. Page added, "In my home I will want you to laugh at my wife, who now is laughing at you. Tell her that Mr. Slender has married her daughter."

Mrs. Page thought, *Doctors doubt that. If Anne Page is my daughter, she is, by this time, Doctor Caius' wife.*

"Doctors doubt that" meant "scholars disagree." Of course, Mrs. Page thought that Doctor Caius would doubt that Anne Page had married Slender since by this time he — Doctor Caius — should have married Anne Page.

Slender walked up to the group and said, "Hey, father Page!"

By "father," he meant "father-in-law," but that was not an accurate title.

Mr. Page said, "Son, hello! Hello, son! Have you completed the business you wanted to complete tonight?"

By "son," he meant "son-in-law," but that was not an accurate title.

Slender said, "Completed the business! I'll make the best people in Gloucestershire know what has happened about that business. I wish that I would be hanged if I do not."

"What has happened about that business, son?" Mr. Page asked. He was referring to the business of Slender marrying Mr. Page's daughter, Anne Page.

Slender replied, "I went yonder to the village of Eton to marry Miss Anne Page, and I found out that the person I thought was Miss Anne Page was actually a big clumsy boy. If we had not been in the church, I would have beaten him, or he would have beaten me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, I wish I would go to sleep and never wake up again! I thought it was Anne Page, and here it was a postmaster's boy!"

The postmaster was in charge of post horses — horses that could be ridden from one town to another for a fee. The postmaster's boy — servant — helped take care of the horses.

"Upon my life, then, you took the wrong fairy," Mr. Page said.

"You don't need to tell me that," Slender said. "I do in fact think that I took the wrong fairy; after all, I took a boy and not a girl. I swear that if I had been married to him, I would not have had him even though he was wearing women's apparel."

Mr. Page said, "Why, this is your own folly. Didn't I tell you how you should know my daughter — by the color of her garments?"

Slender replied, "I went to the 'fairy' wearing white, and I said, 'Mum,' and 'she' said, 'Budget,' as Anne and I had arranged; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy."

Mrs. Page said, "Good George, do not be angry. I knew about your plan to have Slender marry Anne, and so I had my daughter dress in green; and, indeed, she is now with Doctor Caius at the deanery, and there they have been married."

Doctors doubt that.

Doctor Caius now arrived and said, "Vere [Where] is Miss Page? By gar [God], I am cozened [cheated]! I ha' [have] married *un garcon*, a boy; *un paysan* [peasant], by gar, a boy! It is not Anne Page! By gar, I am cozened!"

Mrs. Page asked, "Didn't you run away with the 'fairy' wearing green?"

"Yes, by gar, and it is a boy," Doctor Caius said. "By gar, I'll wake up everybody in Windsor."

He exited.

"This is strange," Mr. Ford said. "Who has gotten the right Anne?"

"My heart troubles me," Mr. Page said. "Look. Here comes Mr. Fenton."

Fenton and Anne Page walked up to the group.

Mr. Page said, "Hello, Mr. Fenton."

"Pardon me, good father!" Anne Page said. "My good mother, pardon me!"

Mr. Page asked, "How did it happen that you did not go with Mr. Slender?"

Mrs. Page asked, "How did it happen that you did not go with Doctor Caius?"

Fenton replied for Anne Page: "You are overwhelming her. Hear the truth about what happened. You would have married her most shamefully; in the marriages you proposed for her there was no love. The truth is that she and I have been in love for a long time and have been engaged to marry each other. We are now entirely sure that nothing can dissolve the union between us because we are legally married. The offence that she has committed is holy. Her deceit cannot be called crafty, disobedient, or unduteous because by marrying me she has avoided and shunned the thousand irreligious cursed hours that a forced and loveless marriage would have brought upon her."

Mr. Ford said to the Pages, "Do not stand here shocked. What's done is done. When it comes to love, the Heavens themselves do rule. Money buys land, but not wives, who are acquired through the workings of fate."

Falstaff said, "I am glad that although you took a special stand to strike at me, your arrow has glanced off me. I am not the only one wounded tonight."

Mr. Page said, "Well, what can I do? Fenton, may Heaven give you joy! What cannot be avoided must be embraced."

Falstaff observed, "When dogs run at night, all sorts of deer are chased."

Mrs. Page said, "Well, I will grumble no further. Mr. Fenton, may Heaven give you many, many merry days!"

She added, "Good husband, let all of us — including Sir John — go to our home, and laugh at tonight's doings over a country fire."

"Good idea," Mr. Ford said.

He added, "Sir John, to Mr. Brook you yet shall keep your word for he tonight shall lie with Mrs. Ford."

## ***CHAPTER VIII: A Midsummer Night's Dream***

### ***PREFACE***

- Shakespeare's comic target in this play is love and the crazy things it makes us do. For example, when you are confronted with two individuals who are alike in almost every way, love can make you hate one individual while you fall in love with the other. Love can also make you fall in love with an ass — someone who is unsuited to you in every way. Theseus falls in love with Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, a society of women who completely rejected men and were believed to mate with men and then kill them and who were thought to kill any male babies born to them.
- Shakespeare deals with the nonrational in this play. Some things are rational, such as mathematics and logic. Other things are irrational, such as putting your hand in a blender and turning it on just to see what it feels like. The realm of the nonrational is the realm of beauty, poetry, laughter, dance, sex, and love. Comedy is nonrational. The arts connect the world of the rational and the nonrational. Much intelligence goes into producing art, but much art explores the world of the nonrational.
- Love is nonrational. Suppose you are confronted with two individuals who are basically alike in beauty, form, character, and personality, but one individual is rich and the other individual is poor. Reason would tell you to fall in love with the rich individual, but you may fall in love with the poor individual.
- The world of the nonrational appears to be more powerful than the world of the rational. Theseus is a very rational man, but despite his best intentions, he cannot help breaking out into laughter at the bad acting and bad play of the craftsmen. And, of course, he falls in love with an Amazon.
- The fairies inhabit the world of the nonrational. They speak a dazzling variety of poetry, and they sing and dance. Puck likes to play jokes on people.
- The word “irrational” means completely opposed to reason. An insane person who believes that two plus three equals four is irrational. Irrationality plays no part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is about the rational, the nonrational, and some of the places they intersect.

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

THESEUS, Duke of Athens

EGEUS, father to Hermia

LYSANDER, in love with Hermia

DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia

PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to Theseus

QUINCE, a carpenter

SNUG, a joiner, aka furniture-maker

BOTTOM, a weaver

FLUTE, a bellows-mender

SNOUT, a tinker

STARVELING, a tailor

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander

HELENA, in love with Demetrius

OBERON, King of the Fairies

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies

PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW, fairy

PEASEBLOSSOM, fairy

COBWEB, fairy

MOTH, fairy

MUSTARDSEED, fairy

PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBY, WALL, MOONSHINE, LION are presented by  
QUINCE, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, STARVELING, and SNUG

Other Fairies attending their King and Queen

Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

In his palace, Duke Theseus of Athens was talking with Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, whom he had defeated in battle, fallen in love with, and was soon to marry.

Theseus said to Hippolyta, “Our wedding day is drawing near. Four happy days will bring in the new Moon, but how slowly the old Moon wanes! She prevents what I want most. She is like a stepmother or a widow who lives on a young man’s inheritance when the young man wants to spend, spend, spend.”

“Four days will quickly become four nights,” Hippolyta replied. “We will quickly dream away the four nights. And then the Moon, resembling a silver bow newly bent in heaven, shall behold the night of our wedding.”

Theseus said to Philostrate, his Master of the Revels, aka Director of Entertainments, “Go, Philostrate, encourage the Athenian youth to be merry. Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth. Let melancholy be reserved only for funerals. Melancholy, a pale companion, must not be present at our celebration.”

Philostrate left to carry out Theseus’ orders.

Theseus said, “Hippolyta, I wooed you with my sword, and I won your love, despite my doing you injuries, but I will wed you in another key, with pomp, with triumph, and with revelry.”

But Theseus was the Duke of Athens, and he had duties to attend to. Egeus, the father of Hermia, walked into the room with his daughter and the two young men who loved her.

Egeus started well with a greeting to Theseus: “Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!”

Theseus, who knew Egeus, a respected citizen of Athens and a member of its aristocracy, well, replied, “Thanks, good Egeus. What is new with you?”

“I have a problem,” Egeus replied. “Full of vexation come I, with a complaint about my child, my daughter Hermia.”

Egeus said, “Stand forth, Demetrius.”

Demetrius came forward.

Egeus said to Theseus, “My noble lord, this man has my consent to marry my daughter, Hermia.”

Egeus said, “Stand forth, Lysander.”

Lysander came forward.

Egeus said to Theseus, “My gracious duke, this man has bewitched the bosom of my child.”

To Lysander, Egeus angrily said, “You, you, Lysander, you have given Hermia rhymes and love poetry, and you have exchanged love-tokens with my daughter. You have by Moonlight at her window sung, with your feigning voice singing verses of feigning love. You have made her

fancy you with locks of your hair, rings, gaudy toys, trinkets, knickknacks, trifles, nosegays, and sweetmeats. All of these things can strongly influence an impressionable and inexperienced young woman. With cunning you have stolen my daughter's heart. You have turned her obedience, which is due to me, into stubborn harshness. Because of you, Lysander, Hermia will not consent to marry Demetrius."

To Theseus, Egeus said, "Therefore, my gracious Duke, I want you to enforce the ancient privilege of fathers in Athens. That privilege is my right to dispose of my daughter as I wish. And that will be either to this gentleman, Demetrius, or to her death. This is in accordance with our Athenian law."

Theseus wanted daughters to obey their fathers. He said, "What do you say, Hermia? Fair maiden, to you your father should be as a god. He is your parent and so gave you your life. It is as if you are his figure that he sculpted in wax. He can either leave the figure alone or disfigure it as he wishes."

Theseus paused, and then he said, "Demetrius is a worthy gentleman."

"So is Lysander," Hermia replied, hotly.

"In himself he is," Theseus said, "but he lacks your father's approval, and therefore Demetrius must be considered the worthier of the two young men."

Hermia said, "I wish that my father looked at Demetrius and Lysander with my eyes."

"No," Theseus said. "Instead, you must look at Demetrius and Lysander with your father's eyes."

Despite being angry, Hermia was polite. She said to Theseus, "Please pardon me. I know not by what power I am made bold, and I worry that I may compromise my reputation for modesty when I plead my thoughts in your presence. But please tell me what is the worst that can happen to me if I refuse to wed Demetrius."

Theseus thought, *The law of Athens says that Hermia must die if she disobeys her father and refuses to wed Demetrius, but the law is too harsh.*

He told Hermia, "You must either be executed or become a nun and remain a virgin forever. Therefore, fair Hermia, think carefully. You are young. You feel passion. Think whether, if you do not obey your father and do not marry Demetrius, you can endure wearing the habit of a nun and be caged forever in a shady cloister. Can you live as a barren, virgin sister all your life and chant hymns to the cold, fruitless Moon? Nuns are three times blessed because they master their passion, and their maiden pilgrimage is rewarded in Heaven. But a married woman is happier on Earth and does not lack a man. She is like a rose whose essence is distilled into perfume and brings happiness. She is unlike a rose that grows, lives, and dies alone on a branch and is never enjoyed."

"I prefer to grow, live, and die alone on a branch rather than marry someone whom I do not love," Hermia said. "I prefer to remain single rather than give my virginity to someone whom I do not love."

"Take some time to think this matter over, Hermia," Theseus said. "By the next new Moon — when Hippolyta and I shall wed and be one forever — you will give me your final answer. At

that time, you will either die because of your disobedience to the will of your father, or you will marry Demetrius, or you will become a nun and remain a virgin forever.”

Demetrius said, “Yield to your father’s will, Hermia, and marry me. And, Lysander, stop pursuing Hermia and allow her to marry me.”

Lysander replied, “You have her father’s love, Demetrius, so let me have Hermia’s. If you want to marry someone, marry Hermia’s father.”

“Scornful Lysander!” Egeus said. “True, Demetrius does have my love. And whatever is mine my love shall give to him. Hermia is my daughter, and I do give her to Demetrius.”

Lysander replied, “Egeus, my family is as good as the family of Demetrius. I have as much wealth as Demetrius. I love Hermia more than he does. My prospects are as good as those of Demetrius, if not better. And what is more important than anything that I have said so far is that Hermia loves me, not Demetrius. So why shouldn’t Hermia and I marry?”

He added, “What’s more — and I say this to Demetrius’ face — he pursued Helena, the daughter of Nedar, and he won her heart. Helena loves him. She loves him, devoutly loves him, loves him to the point of idolatry. She loves Demetrius, this morally stained man who is unfaithful to those who love him.”

Theseus said, “I must confess that I have heard that Demetrius pursued Helena and that she loves him. I have been busy with my own personal affairs and forgot about it; otherwise, I would have spoken to him about it. Still, that does not change the law. Demetrius and Egeus, both of you come with me. I want to talk to both of you. In the meantime, Hermia, make up your mind to obey your father and marry Demetrius, or else the law of Athens — which I can by no means extenuate — will either sentence you to death or to a single life in perpetuity.”

Theseus then said, “Come, my Hippolyta.”

Hippolyta had listened to the young lovers and did not look happy about Theseus’ ruling. Theseus noticed this and asked her, “Is something wrong?” She turned her back on him and did not answer him.

Theseus turned to Demetrius and Egeus and said, “Come with me. I must employ you in some business related to our wedding and also talk to you about some business of your own.”

“With duty and desire, we follow you,” Egeus replied.

All except Lysander and Hermia left the room.

“How are you, my love?” Lysander said, “Why is your cheek so pale? Why do the roses there fade so fast?”

“Perhaps because of lack of rain,” Hermia replied. “But I can well water the roses in my cheeks with my tears.”

“From everything that I have ever read or heard from tale or history, the course of true love never did run smooth,” Lysander said. “Either the lovers were different in family...”

“Too high a class to be in love with someone from a lower class.”

“Or else the lovers were mismatched in age.”

“Too old to be engaged to young.”

“Or else the marriage match was to be arranged by relatives.”

“Oh, Hell! To choose a lover by another’s eyes.”

“Or,” Lysander said, “if there were a sympathy in choice, then war, death, or sickness did lay siege to it, making it as momentary as a sound, as swift as a shadow, as short as a dream, as brief as the lightning in the blackened night, that, in a flash, reveals both Heaven and Earth, and before a man has time to say ‘Behold!’ the jaws of darkness do devour it. So quickly do bright things that are full of life come to ruin.”

“Since true lovers have always been opposed in their love, such opposition must be a rule of fate and destiny — and therefore, since our love is opposed, our love must be true,” Hermia said. “Let us then be perseverant and enduring as we confront our trial because the trial we face is customary for true lovers. Opposition is as necessary to true love as are thoughts and dreams and sighs and wishes and tears. All of these things accompany true love.”

“You speak truly,” Lysander said. “Therefore, listen to me, Hermia. I have a widowed aunt. She is a dowager of great fortune, and she has no children. Her house is twenty or so miles away from Athens, and she considers me her only son. If we go to her, Hermia, we can be married — the sharp Athenian law does not reach as far as her house. So if you love me, sneak out of your father’s house tomorrow night, and go into the forest outside Athens, where once I met you and Helena to celebrate the first of May. I will wait there for you.”

“My good Lysander!” Hermia said. “I swear to you, by Cupid’s strongest bow, by his best arrow with the love-causing golden arrowhead, by the simplicity of Venus’ sacred doves, by that which unites souls and prospers loves, and by that fire that burned Dido, the Queen of Carthage, when the unfaithful Trojan Aeneas sailed away from her, by all the vows that ever men have broken, in number more than women have ever spoken, in that same place that you have mentioned, tomorrow truly will I meet with you.”

“Keep your promise, love,” Lysander said. He looked up and said, “Look, here comes Helena.”

Hermia said, “God bless you, fair Helena! Where are you going?”

“Call you me fair?” Helena said. “That fair again unsay. Demetrius loves your beauty, not my beauty. Oh, happy fair! Your eyes are as bright as the stars that guide sailors at night. The sweet sound of your voice is more beautiful than that of a morning lark to a shepherd’s ear. When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear in the spring, lovesickness is contagious. I wish that appearance and attributes were also contagious. If they were so, I would do my best to catch your appearance and attributes, Hermia, before I leave. My ear would catch your voice, my eye would catch your eye, my tongue would catch your tongue’s sweet melody. If I owned all the world, I would give it all to you if only I could be transformed into you and so be loved by Demetrius. Please, teach me how you look, and with what art you sway the motion of Demetrius’ heart.”

“I frown upon Demetrius, yet he loves me still,” Hermia said.

“I wish that your frowns would teach my smiles how to make Demetrius love me!”

“I give him curses, yet he gives me love.”

“I wish that my prayers could cause such affection for me in Demetrius!”

“The more I hate him, the more he follows me.

“The more I love him, the more he hates me.”

“His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.”

“No fault, but your beauty — I wish that fault were mine!”

“Take comfort,” Hermia said. “Demetrius no more shall see my face; Lysander and myself will flee from this place. Before I did Lysander see, Athens did seem a paradise to me, but such graces in my love do dwell, that Lysander has turned a Heaven into a Hell! If I can’t marry Lysander in Athens, then Athens is a Hell to me.”

Lysander said, “Helena, to you our minds we will unfold. Tomorrow night, when the Moon beholds her silver visage in the watery mirrors of pools and lakes, and dews with liquid pearl the bladed grass, a time that conceals the flights of lovers, we plan to pass through Athens’ gates.”

“And in the wood,” Hermia said, “where often you and I upon pale primrose-beds were accustomed to lie, emptying our bosoms of their sweet secrets to each other, there my Lysander and I shall meet, and thence from Athens turn away our eyes, to seek new friends and the company of strangers. Farewell, sweet playmate. Pray for us, and may good luck give you your Demetrius! Keep your word to me, Lysander. We must now separate and starve our sight of lovers’ food until we meet in the forest tomorrow at deep midnight.”

“I will keep my word to you, my Hermia.”

Hermia departed.

Lysander said, “Helena, *adieu*. As you on him, may Demetrius dote on you!”

Lysander departed.

Helena said to herself, “How much happier than other people can some people be! For example, Hermia is much happier than me. Throughout Athens I am thought to be as beautiful as she. But so what? Demetrius does not think it so. He will not know what all but he do know. He wanders around, infatuated with Hermia’s eyes. I also wander around, admiring Demetrius’ qualities. Things base and vile, having no good quality, love can make appear to have form and dignity. Love looks not with the eyes, but with the heart, and that is why in art blindfolds make winged Cupid blind. Love has nothing to do with reason — the wings and blind eyes of Cupid symbolize the unheedy haste of lovers. That is why Cupid is said to be a child — because in choice he is so often beguiled.

“Many waggish boys in their games lie and falsely swear, and likewise male lovers perjure themselves everywhere. For before Demetrius looked at and loved Hermia’s eyes, he swore many oaths that he loved only mine. His protestations of his love for me rained down like hail, but when this hail felt some heat from Hermia, his protestations of love dissolved, and showers of his oaths did melt. I will go tell him of fair Hermia’s flight, and then to the forest will he pursue her tomorrow night. If for this information he tells me thanks, it is a dear expense for me, but herein mean I to enrich my pain: to have his sight thither and back again — if all goes

well tomorrow night, Demetrius will stop looking at Hermia and instead will look again at me.”

— 1.2 —

A number of craftsmen of Athens were meeting in the house of Peter Quince the carpenter: Nick Bottom the weaver, Francis Flute the bellows-mender, Tom Snout the tinker, Robin Starveling the tailor, and Snug the joiner, aka furniture-maker.

Quince asked, “Is all our company here?”

Bottom replied, “You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the written list.”

*Generally?* Quince thought. *Bottom means individually. He is a good man and a good friend, but he sometimes mixes up his words.*

“Here is a list of every man’s name,” Quince said, “who is thought fit, through all of Athens, to play in our interlude, or brief play, before the Duke and the Duchess on the night of their wedding day.”

“First, good Peter Quince,” Bottom said, “say what the play is about, and then read the names of the actors, and so come to a conclusion.”

Quince said, “That’s a good idea. Our play is titled ‘The Most Lamentable Comedy, and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.’”

“I am sure that it is a very good piece of work, and a merry piece of work,” Bottom said, “Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Fellow actors, gather around him.”

“Answer as I call your name,” Quince said. “Nick Bottom, the weaver.”

“Present,” Bottom said. “Name the part that I will play, Quince, and proceed.”

“You, Nick Bottom, will play Pyramus.”

“What is the part of Pyramus, Quince? Is he a lover, or a tyrant?”

“He is a lover who kills himself most gallantly for love.”

“That will require an actor who is capable of crying and of making the audience cry tears of sorrow,” Bottom said. “If I perform the part, let the audience be careful not to injure their eyes with their crying because I will move storms — I will arouse pity in the audience.”

He paused, and then he said, “And yet I would prefer to play a tyrant. I could play the role of Ercles exceptionally well.”

*Ercles?* Quince thought. *Oh, Bottom means Hercules.*

“I could rant admirably,” Bottom continued. “I could bring the house down and make the audience applaud. I will show you — listen:

“The raging rocks

“And shivering shocks

“Shall break the locks

“Of prison gates;

“And Phibbus’ car

“Shall shine from afar

“And make and mar

“The foolish Fates.”

*That was excellent, Quince thought. I wish I could write that well. I also wish that Bottom would say Phoebus’ car, so that any listeners would understand that he is talking about the Sun-chariot of Phoebus Apollo.*

Bottom, a man of enthusiasm, enthusiastically approved of his ham acting: “That was lofty!”

He continued, “Now name the rest of the players, but that is how I would play a role like Eracles. Of course, the role of a lover is more condoling — it requires expressions of grief.”

Quince resumed the roll call and role call of names:

“Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.”

“Here, Peter Quince,” Flute responded.

“Flute, you must play the role of Thisby.”

“Who is Thisby? A wandering knight?”

“She is the lady whom Pyramus loves.”

“Please, no,” Flute said. “Let me not play a woman: I am growing a beard.”

“That doesn’t matter,” Quince said. “You shall play it in a mask, and you will speak as softly and lady-like as you can.”

“Since Thisby’s face is hidden,” Bottom said, “let me play Thisby, too. I’ll speak in a monstrous little voice when I play her so people will know that I am not still playing Pyramus. Listen.”

In a deep voice, Bottom declaimed, “Thisne! Thisne!”

Then in a falsetto voice, he declaimed, “Ah, Pyramus, lover dear. I am your Thisby, dear. I am your dear Thisby.”

Quince said, sternly, “No, no. You must play Pyramus, and Flute must play Thisby.”

Disappointed, Bottom said, “Well, proceed.”

Quince read the next name on his list: “Robin Starveling, the tailor.”

“Here I am, Peter Quince.”

“Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby’s mother.”

Quince read the next name on his list: “Tom Snout, the tinker.”

“Here I am, Peter Quince.”

“You must play Pyramus’ father, and I will play Thisby’s father. One role is left. Snug the furniture-maker, you must take the part of the lion. Here, I hope, is a well-cast play.”

“Have you written down the lion’s part?” Snug asked. “If you have, please give it to me because I am slow of study.”

“There is no need to write down the lion’s part,” Quince said, “because it consists of nothing but roaring.”

Bottom sensed an opportunity: “Let me play the part of the lion, too. I will roar in such a way that I will do any man’s heart good to hear me; I will roar in such a way that I will make the Duke say, ‘Let him roar again! Let him roar again!’”

“But if you roar too ferociously,” Quince objected, “you would frighten the Duchess and the ladies. They would scream, and the Duke would hang us all.”

All the craftsmen agreed: “That would be enough to hang us, every mother’s son.”

“I grant you, friends,” Bottom said, “that if any of us should frighten the ladies out of their wits, we would all be hanged, but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar as gently as any sucking dove or nightingale roars.”

*There Bottom goes again, Quince thought. He is still trying to magnify his time on stage, and still mixing up his words — he said “aggravate” when he meant to say “moderate.” And “sucking” — or “suckling” — is not a word that describes a dove.*

Quince said to Bottom, “You can play no part but the part of Pyramus because Pyramus is a sweet-faced man. He is a proper man, as proper and handsome a man as anyone can see on a summer’s day. He is a most lovely gentleman-like man. Therefore, you are the man who must play the role of Pyramus.”

Flattered, Bottom said, “Well, I will undertake it. What beard will be best for me to play the role in?”

“You may play the role in whichever beard you prefer,” Quince replied.

“I will wear either a straw-colored beard, an orange-tawny beard, a red beard, or a yellow beard that is the color of a French crown — a gold coin.”

Quince joked, “Some of your French crowns have no hair at all because of the French disease: syphilis. In that case, you will have to play the part bald.”

He gave each actor a sheet of paper and said, “Here are written copies of your parts for all of you to study. I entreat you, request you, and desire you to have memorized them by tomorrow night. At that time, we will meet in the forest outside of Athens. By Moonlight, we will rehearse our play. It is best to rehearse in the forest because if we rehearse in town, people will gather around and bother us, and everyone will know what we are doing. In the meantime, I will make up a list of the props that we will need for our play. Please be sure to show up tomorrow night.”

Bottom replied, “We will meet you then at wherever you want; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains and study your parts carefully, everyone. We

want the play to be perfect. *Adieu.*”

“Then it is settled,” Quince said. “We will meet at the Duke’s oak tomorrow night.”

“Hold, or cut bow-strings,” Bottom said. “Fish, or cut bait. Poop, or get off the pot. Be there, or be square. You know what I mean. See you tomorrow night.”

## CHAPTER 2

### — 2.1 —

In the forest near Athens, a fairy met Puck.

“How now, spirit! Whither wander you?” Puck inquired.

The fairy replied, “Over hill, over dale, through bush, through brier, over park, in light so pale, through flood, through fire, I do wander everywhere, swifter than the Moon’s sphere; and I serve Titania, the fairy Queen — I dance for her upon the green. The cowslips tall her bodyguards be. In their gold coats, spots you see — those be rubies, fairy favors, and in those spots live their savors. I must go and seek some dewdrops here and hang a pearl in every cowslip’s ear. Farewell, rustic spirit. I must go — and how! Our Queen and all her elves will come here now.”

Puck replied, “Oberon our King does keep his revels here tonight: Take heed our Queen come not within his sight. For Oberon is very fierce and angry because Titania has a new attendant: a lovely boy, stolen from an Indian King. She has never had so sweet a changeling. Jealous Oberon would make the child a knight of his train of followers, so the child can walk through the forests wild. But Titania withholds the beloved boy, crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy. Now Oberon and Titania never meet in grove or green, by fountain clear, or in spangled starlight sheen. Instead, they quarrel, and all their elves do fear and creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.”

The fairy recognized Puck, a celebrity in Fairyland: “Either I mistake your shape and form quite, or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite called Robin Goodfellow. Aren’t you he who frightens the maidens of the villagery, skims the cream from milk, and sometimes makes the breathless housewife grind and churn but make no flour and no butter that will for her money earn? Aren’t you he who sometimes makes the beer to bear no froth and misleads night-wanderers, laughing at them when they are lost? Some call you Hobgoblin, and others call you Puck, and those you befriend will have good luck. Aren’t you that Puck?”

“You speak aright,” Puck replied. “I am that merry wanderer of the night. I jest to Oberon and make him smile, and sometimes I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile when I neigh as if I were a filly foal. Sometimes I hide in a gossip’s bowl as if I were a roasted crabapple, and when she drinks, against her lips I bob and on her withered dewlap pour the ale. The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale, sometimes for a three-foot stool mistakes me. When she tries to sit on me, then slip I from her bum, and down topples she, and she falls on the floor roughly and after she falls she coughs. Then her friends hold their hips and laugh and sneeze and swear — a merrier hour was never spent there. But make room, fairy — here comes Oberon!”

“And here comes Titania, my mistress. I wish that Oberon were gone!”

The Fairy King and Queen appeared with many attendants.

“Ill met by Moonlight, proud Titania,” Oberon said.

“What, jealous Oberon, are you here? Fairies, let us leave at once. I have sworn never again to be in Oberon’s bed or in his presence.”

“Stay here, rash wanton,” Oberon said. “Isn’t it true that I am your husband?”

“Then I must be your wife,” Titania replied, “but I know of your affairs. I know when you have stolen away from Fairyland, and in the shape of a mortal lover sat all day, playing on a homemade flute and singing verses of love to an amorous mortal lover. Why are you here, recently returned from the farthest mountain range of India? You must be here because Hippolyta, the swaggering Amazon, your boot-wearing mistress and your warrior love, to Theseus is going to be married, and you have come to give their bed joy and prosperity.”

“For shame, Titania,” Oberon replied. “How can you criticize my love for Hippolyta when I know about your love for Theseus? Haven’t you protected him from the consequences of his affairs? Didn’t you lead him through the glimmering night when he abandoned Perigenia, whom he had kidnapped and seduced? And didn’t you help him when he seduced and abandoned Aegles, Ariadne, and Antiopa? Theseus has been quite the lover boy, and without fairy help, he would have paid for his seductions and not felt joy!”

“These are the lies of jealousy,” Titania replied. “Ever since the beginning of midsummer, each time we have met, whether on hill or in dale, forest, or meadow, by paved fountain or by brook banked with growing rushes, or on the beaches of the sea, to dance our ringlets to the whistling winds, you have disturbed our dances with your quarrels.”

Titania added, “Because you and I, the King and Queen of Fairyland, are quarreling, the winds, tired of singing to us in vain, in revenge have sucked up from the sea noxious waters, which have fallen as rain in the land and have made every petty river so grand and so proud that they have overflowed their banks. Because of our quarrel, crops will not grow — the ox has pulled in vain the plow, the farmer has nothing for his sweat to show, and the green corn dies before the cob grows a silky beard. In the flooded fields stand pens empty of sheep, and crows grow fat from feasting on the dead flock’s meat. Covered with mud are football fields, and paths grow faint with disuse that were by lovers formerly filled.”

Titania continued, “Because of our quarrel, the natural seasons are confused. Human mortals lack their winters, a season that has its pleasures. No night is blessed with hymn or carol, and the Moon, the governess of floods, pale in her anger, washes all the air, causing colds and rheumatic diseases. The disturbance in the natural order caused by our quarrel has altered the seasons. Hoary-headed frost coats the crimson roses, and the mocking crown of Old Man Winter is a sweet-smelling wreath of summer buds. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter are all mixed up, and the amazed world no longer knows which is when. All of these evils come from our quarrel — we are their parents and origin.”

“You can easily fix everything,” Oberon replied, “Why should you argue with me? I do but beg a little changeling boy, my servant to be. Give him to me.”

“That won’t happen,” Titania said. “Not all of Fairyland would I take for the boy. His mother was a priestess of my order, and, in the spiced Indian air, by night, very often has given me joy as she talked with me and sat with me on the sea’s yellow sands, watching the traders sailing on the ocean. We have laughed as we watched the ships’ sails conceive and grow pregnant by the wanton wind. She — pregnant with the child, and walking with a pretty swimming gait — imitated the big-bellied sails. She sailed upon the land, got for me small gifts, and returned again, as if she had returned from a voyage, rich with merchandise. Unfortunately, she, being mortal, died giving birth to that boy; for her sake I will bring up her boy, and for her sake I will not part from him.”

“How long within this forest do you intend to stay?” Oberon asked.

“Probably until after Theseus’ wedding day,” Titania replied. “If you will peacefully dance in our circles and see our Moonlit revels, you are welcome to come with us. If you are not willing to be peaceful, then shun me, and I will shun your haunts.”

“Give me that boy, and I will happily go with you.”

“I will not give you the boy even if you give me your fairy kingdom,” Titania replied. “He stays with me and my followers. Fairies, away! Oberon and I will loudly quarrel, if I longer stay.”

Titania and her fairies departed.

Oberon said to himself, “Well, go your way, but you shall not depart from this forest until after I torment you for not giving me that boy.”

He said louder, “My dear Puck, come here. Do you remember when once I sat upon a promontory, and heard a mermaid on a dolphin’s back singing such a sweet and harmonious song that the high waves of the sea calmed and stars fell out of the sky to come closer to hear the sea-maiden sing?”

“I remember.”

“That was the time I — but not you — saw Cupid, armed with arrows, flying between the cold Moon and the Earth. He took aim at a virgin sitting in a throne in the West, and he shot his love-arrow smartly from his bow and it seemed as if it could pierce a hundred thousand hearts. But the Moon is ruled by the virgin goddess Diana, and the chaste beams of the silvery Moon put out the flames of young Cupid’s fiery shaft, and the virgin continued to think the thoughts of a maiden and neglected to think the thoughts of a lover. I remember where the arrow of Cupid fell. It fell upon a little flower in the West. The flower used to be milky white, but now it is purple — it changed colors when hit by Cupid’s arrow just as love’s wound causes maidens to change colors when their beloved’s name is mentioned. Maidens call that flower love-in-idleness. Fetch me that flower — I once showed it to you. The juice of that flower when squeezed onto sleeping eyelids will make a man or woman madly love the next live creature it sees. Fetch me that flower quickly — before a whale can swim three miles.”

“I’ll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes,” Puck replied, and then he flew away.

Oberon said to himself, “Once I have this juice, I will wait until Titania is asleep, and then I will drip its juice onto her eyelids. The next thing she waking looks upon, be it a lion, bear, wolf, or bull, or a meddling monkey or ape, she shall pursue with the soul of love. And before I take this charm from off her sight, as I can with another herb, I will make her give up the Indian boy to me.”

Oberon heard a noise, and he said to himself, “But who are coming here? I will make myself invisible, and I will overhear their conversation.”

Demetrius and Helena came close to Oberon, whom they did not see.

Exasperated, Demetrius said to Helena, “I do not love you, so stop following me. Where are Lysander and fair Hermia? The one I will slay, the other has already slain me with her lack of love. You told me they had stolen away from Athens and come to this forest, and I am going

nutty among these nut trees and batty among these homes for bats and wild in this wilderness, all because I cannot find Hermia. Go away, leave me, and follow me no more.”

“Your attractiveness attracts me toward you,” Helena replied. “The kind of love you draw from my heart is not base iron but a finer metal, for my heart is as true as steel. Only if your attractiveness stops attracting me toward you will I stop following you.”

“Do I entice you?” Demetrius said. “Do I speak fair words to you? No! Instead, I in plain truth and in plain language tell you that I do not and I cannot love you.”

“And even for that do I love you the more,” Helena replied. “I am your cocker spaniel, I am your pet dog, and, Demetrius, the more you beat me, the more I will love you. Treat me as you treat your cocker spaniel, spurn me, strike me, neglect me, lose me. Do whatever you want to me as long as you allow me, unworthy as I am, to follow you. What worse place can I beg in your love — and yet for me it is a place of high respect — than to be treated by you as you treat your dog?”

“Be careful not to put to the test my hatred of you because I am sick when I look at you.”

“And I am sick when I do not look at you,” Helena replied.

“You do risk your reputation and your virginity too much, to leave the city and commit yourself into the hands of me, a man who does not love you. It is dark, we are in a deserted place, and if I were a different kind of man, I could force myself on you.”

“Your goodness will protect me and prevent you from taking advantage of me,” Helena said. “When I look at you, I see no night, and therefore I see no darkness. This forest is not deserted. Why? Because you are my entire world. How can anyone say that I am alone, when all the world is standing in front of me?”

“I’ll run from you and hide in the thickets and leave you to the mercy of wild beasts,” Demetrius said.

“The wildest of wild animals has not such a heart as you. Run whenever and wherever you will; the story of Apollo and Daphne shall be changed. In the old tale, the mortal Daphne ran from the god Apollo, who pursued her. But with you as Apollo and with me as Daphne, Apollo will flee, and Daphne will chase. The dove will pursue the eagle; the mild doe will speed to catch the tiger. A coward will pursue a fleeing brave man!”

“I will not stay around to listen to you. Either let me leave you, or be afraid that if you follow me I will do some harm to you in these woods.”

Fortunately, despite making the threat, Demetrius was not the kind of man who would carry out the threat.

“You have already done harm to me in the temple, in the town, and in the field, Demetrius! You have wronged me by making me do the wooing, and you have wronged all women! Women cannot fight for love, as men may do; women should be wooed and were not made to woo. You, Demetrius, should be wooing me.”

Demetrius made a motion as if to kick her and then fled.

Helena said, "I will follow you and make a Heaven of Hell, by dying at the hand of the man I love so well."

She ran after Demetrius.

Oberon had watched and heard everything, and his own marital woes made him empathize with Helena.

He said, "Fare thee well, nymph. You are of an age to be married to this young man, and before he leaves this grove, you shall flee from him and he shall seek your love."

Puck, having returned from his journey, went to Oberon, who said, "Welcome, wanderer. Do you have the flower?"

"Yes, here it is."

"Please give it to me," Oberon said. "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, where oxlips and the nodding violet grows. It is quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine, with sweet musk-roses and with eglantine. There sleeps Titania sometimes during the night, and among all those flowers she is lulled by dances and delight. There the snake sheds its enameled skin, which is wide enough to make a garment to wrap a fairy in. With the juice of this flower, I will streak Titania's eyes, and make her mind full of lovesick fantasies."

He added, "Puck, take part of this flower and look throughout this grove for a sweet young Athenian lady who is in love with a youth who disdains her. Anoint his eyes with the juice of this flower, but do it when the next thing he sees will be the Athenian lady. You shall know the man by the Athenian clothing he is wearing. Do what I tell you to do with care, so that he will be more in love with her than she is in love with him, and know that you must meet me before the first cock crows."

"Fear not, my King, your servant shall do so."

— 2.2 —

In another part of the forest, Titania and her fairy attendants were settling in for the night.

Titania ordered, "Come and dance in a fairy ring and sing a fairy song. Then leave and attend to your duties. Some of you will kill cankerworms in the musk-rose buds, and some of you will war with bats and take their leathern wings to make my small elves coats, and some of you will keep back the clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders at our dainty spirits. Sing me now asleep, then attend to your work and let me rest."

The fairies sang this song:

*"You spotted snakes with forked tongue,*

*"and thorny hedgehogs, be not seen.*

*"Newts and small snakes, do no wrong,*

*"come not near our fairy Queen.*

*"Nightingale, with melody,*

*"sing in our sweet lullaby.*

*“Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.*

*“May no harm,*

*“or spell or charm,*

*“come near our lovely lady here.*

*“Say good night with a lullaby.*

*“Weaving spiders, come not here.*

*“Go away, you long-legged spinners, go hence!*

*“Beetles black, approach not near.*

*“Snake and snail, do no offence.*

*“Nightingale, with melody,*

*“sing in our sweet lullaby.*

*“Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.*

*“May no harm,*

*“or spell or charm,*

*“come near our lovely lady here.*

*“Say good night with a lullaby.”*

A fairy said, “Away we go! All is well! One alone stand sentinel.”

Most of the fairies departed, and the lone sentinel made a poor guard. The sentinel did not dare interfere with Oberon, King of the Fairies, and flew away when Oberon appeared.

Oberon walked to the sleeping Titania and squeezed the juice of the flower onto her eyelids and said, “Whatever you see when you wake, do it for your true love take. Love and languish for his sake. Whether it be lynx, or wildcat, or bear, or panther, or boar with bristled hair, whatever shall appear before your eyes when you do awake, you shall love it for its own sake. Whatever you see when you do wake, dear Titania, you will hold it dear, so wake when some vile thing is near.”

As soon as Oberon flew away, Lysander and Hermia walked close to Titania, the sleeping fairy Queen, but they did not see her.

Lysander said to Hermia, “Fair love, you are faint from much wandering in the wood; and to say the truth, I have forgotten our way: We are lost. Let us rest here, Hermia, if you think it a good idea, and we will wait for the comfort of morning and daylight.”

“Let it be done,” Hermia said. “Lysander, find a place for you to make your bed, for I upon this bank will rest my head.”

“One piece of ground shall serve as bed for us both,” Lysander said. “We need no ground between us to waste. We will have one bed and one heart, and we will pledge to each other our

lover's faith."

"No, good Lysander, Hermia replied. "For my sake, my dear, lie further away, do not lie by me so near."

"Understand what is behind my words, my sweet, and know that it is innocence!" Lysander said. "Lovers understand each other's meaning in each sentence. I mean that my heart unto yours is so knit that only one heart we can make of it, and both of us know we do love each other. So by your side let me tonight lie, for when I tell you I love you, you know I do not lie."

"Lysander, you speak very prettily, and please forgive me if you thought that I think you lied, but gentle friend, for love and courtesy lie further away. Be courteous and let there be such separation between us as may well be said becomes a virtuous bachelor and a modest maiden. So make your bed at a distance from me, and good night, sweet friend. May your love for me never alter until your life ends."

Lysander was disappointed, but he was a man who took no for an answer, so he said, "Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I; and may my life end when I end my love for you! Over here will I make my bed. May you sleep well where you rest your sweet head."

"May you sleep as well as I, while I take my rest in my sweet nest," Hermia replied.

Hermia and Lysander were asleep when Puck arrived and complained, "Throughout the forest have I gone, but Athenian found I none on whose eyes I might test this flower's force in causing love. All is night and silence."

Puck then caught sight of Lysander: "Who is here? Clothing of Athens he does wear. This is he, my master said, who despised the Athenian maiden."

Puck then looked at Hermia and said, "And here is the maiden, sleeping sound, on the dank and dirty ground. Pretty soul! She dares not lie near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy."

Puck went to Lysander and squeezed the juice of the flower onto his sleeping eyelids.

He then said, "Chump, upon your eyes have I thrown all the power this charm does own. When you wake, you pest, may love forbid you any more rest. So awake when I am gone, for I must go to Oberon."

Puck flew away, and immediately Demetrius and Helena ran near Lysander and Hermia and stopped.

"Stay here and run no more, even though you kill me, sweet Demetrius," Helena pleaded.

"I order you to leave and to leave me alone," Demetrius replied.

"Will you leave me in the dark? Do not so."

"Stay here, or face my anger. I alone will go," Demetrius said before crashing through the forest again.

"Oh, I am out of breath in this fond chase!" Helena said. "The more I pray, the less is my grace. Happy is Hermia, wherever she lies, for she has blessed and attractive eyes. Why are her eyes so bright? Salt tears did not make them bright. My eyes are oftener washed with salt tears than hers, and my eyes are not so bright as hers. No, no, I am as ugly as a bear. Beasts that

meet me run away in fear. Therefore, I should not marvel that Demetrius runs away from me as if he were from a monster fleeing. What wicked and lying mirror made me seek to compare my eyes with Hermia's eyes that are as bright as the stars in the sky at night?"

Helena, seeing Lysander lying on the ground, said, "But who is here? Lysander! On the ground! Is he dead? Or asleep? I see no blood, no wound. Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake."

Lysander awoke and said, "And run through fire I will for your sweet sake. Radiant Helena! Now that I have awakened, I can see into your heart. Where is Demetrius? Oh, how fit a word is that vile name to perish on my sword!"

"Do not say that, Lysander; do not say that," Helena said. "So what if he loves your Hermia? It doesn't matter because Hermia still loves you. Be content with that, and leave Demetrius alone."

"Content with Hermia!" Lysander said. "No! I do repent the tedious minutes I with her have spent. Not Hermia but Helena I love. Who will not change a raven for a dove? The love a man feels is by his reason swayed, and reason says you are the worthier maiden. Things growing are not ripe until their season, so I, being young, was not until now ripe to reason. Now that I have grown up, reason becomes the leader of my will and leads me to your eyes, where I look and see love's stories written in love's richest book."

Helena was certain that Lysander was cruelly mocking her by pretending to be in love with her. She complained, "Why was I to this keen mockery born? When at your hands did I deserve this scorn? Is it not enough, young man, that I did never, no, nor never can, despite how I try, deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eyes? Why then must you mock my insufficiency? You do me wrong, you do, by pretending to love me and me to woo. But fare you well, although I must confess I thought you were a man of true gentleness. Oh, that a lady, by one man refused, should by another therefore be ill used!"

Helena ran away from Lysander.

Lysander said, "She did not see Hermia. Hermia, sleep you here, and may you never come Lysander near! Just like a surfeit of the sweetest things, the deepest loathing to the stomach brings, or as the heresies that men do leave are hated most by those whom the heresies did deceive, so you, my surfeit and my heresy, by all be hated, but most of all by me! And, all my talents, address your love and might to honor Helen and to be her knight!"

Lysander ran after Helena.

A nightmare woke Hermia: "Help me, Lysander, help me! Do your best to pluck this crawling serpent from my breast! What a nightmare I had here! Lysander, look how I do shake with fear. I thought that a serpent was eating my heart, and you sat smiling as the serpent played his part. Lysander! Gone?"

She shouted, "Lysander! Can you hear me?"

She listened, and then she said, "You must be out of range of hearing me. Lysander, where are you? Speak, if you can hear me! Speak, my love! I almost faint with fear!"

No reply came, and Hermia said, "I know you are not near. I will go and seek you because you are my dear. I will find either my dear or my death."

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

Titania, Queen of the Fairies, lay asleep near the place in the forest where the craftsmen of Athens — Bottom, Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling — had come to practice their play.

Bottom asked, “Are we all here?”

“Yes, we are,” Quince said, “and here is a marvelous and convenient place for our rehearsal. This green patch of grass shall be our stage, and this hawthorn thicket shall be our backstage. We will rehearse our play as we will do it before the Duke.”

“Peter Quince,” Bottom said.

“What do you want, good friend Bottom?”

“There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please the audience. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself, which the ladies will not stand. What do you say to that?”

Snout said, “Bottom is right. The ladies will be frightened.”

Starveling said, “I believe we must leave the killing out.”

“No, we can leave the killing in the play,” Bottom said. “I have a device that will make all well. Quince, write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say that we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will keep the ladies from being afraid.”

“That’s a good idea,” Quince said. “We will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in alternating eight- and six-syllable lines.”

“No,” Bottom objected, “make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.”

Snout asked, “Won’t the ladies be afraid of the lion?”

“I am afraid of it, I promise you,” Starveling said.

“We need to think carefully about bringing a lion onstage,” Bottom said. “To bring in — Heaven help us! — a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing because there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living.”

“Therefore another prologue must say that he is not a lion,” Snout suggested.

Bottom considered that idea — he might be able to have more lines to recite — but he wanted his friends to get recognition, too. Therefore, he said, “No, the actor playing the lion must say his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion’s neck, and he himself must speak through, saying this, or to the same defect — ‘Ladies,’ or ‘Fair ladies’ — ‘I would wish you,’ or ‘I would request you,’ or ‘I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble. I pledge my life to protect yours. If you think I am come hither as a lion, it could mean the end of my life. No, I

am not a lion; I am a man as other men are.’ Then let the lion tell the ladies plainly that he is Snug the joiner.”

“It shall be done,” Quince said. “But there are two hard things that remain. First, how can we bring the Moonlight into a chamber? According to the story, Pyramus and Thisby meet by Moonlight.”

“Does the Moon shine the night that we play our play?” Snout asked.

“A calendar, a calendar!” Bottom said. “Look in the almanac and see whether the Moon shines that night.”

Quince took a book out of his pocket, turned some pages, and said, “Yes, the Moon shines that night.”

“Good,” Bottom said. “We can open a window, and the Moon will shine through the window.”

“Yes, that will work,” Quince said, “or one of us actors could come in with a bushel of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine.”

Flute thought, *That would work. The man could be the Man in the Moon. According to an old story, a man gathered thorns for firewood on Sunday and as punishment, he was placed on the Moon to live thereafter. And interestingly, Bottom — who said “defect” when he meant “effect”— is not the only one here who sometimes misuses words. Quince talked about how one of us actors could “disfigure” the Moon when he meant that one of us could be the figure — the symbol — of the Moon. Quince also said that that actor could “present” the person of Moonshine, but he should have said, “represent.” So be it. We all make mistakes.*

Quince added, “There is a second problem that we must solve. We must have a wall in the great chamber because Pyramus and Thisby, according to the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.”

“We cannot bring a wall into the Duke’s great chamber,” Snout said. “Do you have any ideas about what we can do, Bottom?”

“Some man or other must present Wall,” Bottom said, “and let him have some plaster, or some clay, or some cement to signify a wall; and let him hold his fingers like this” — Bottom made an OK sign with the fingers of his right hand — “and through that O shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.”

“If we do that, then all is well,” Quince said. “Come, sit down, every mother’s son, and we will rehearse our parts. Pyramus, you begin. When you have spoken your speech, enter into that thicket. That is where you should be unless you are onstage.”

Puck flew near and noticed the craftsmen. He made himself invisible and walked among them, saying, “Here are Athenian craftsmen who are wearing homespun cloth of hemp. What hempen homespuns are these swaggering here, so near the bed of the fairy Queen? I see! They are rehearsing a play. I will be their audience. I will also be an actor, if I see fit.”

Quince, the director as well as the author of the play, said, “Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, come forward.”

Bottom, as Pyramus, said to Flute, who was playing Thisby, “Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet —”

Quince corrected him, “Odors, odors.”

“Odors savors sweet,” Bottom said, “So has your breath, my dearest Thisby dear. But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile, and by and by I will to thee appear.”

Bottom exited, and Puck said to himself, “He is the strangest Pyramus that I have ever seen!” Then Puck followed Bottom.

“Must I speak now?” Flute asked.

“Yes,” Quince said. “Pyramus has left to see about a voice that he heard, and he is to come back again soon.”

Flute recited, “Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,

“Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,

“Most lively juvenile and eke most lovely Jew,

“As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,

“I’ll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny’s tomb.”

“Say ‘Ninus’ tomb.’ Ninus was the founder of the ancient city Nineveh,” Quince said, “but don’t say that line yet. Pyramus will come back and speak, and then you will say that line to him.”

Quince complained, “Why, you are speaking all your lines at once, cues and all.”

Quince then called to Bottom, “Pyramus, enter. Your cue for coming onstage has been spoken — it is ‘never tire.’”

Flute said, “Oh!” and then recited, “As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.”

Bottom and Puck came out of the thicket. Puck had worked some magic, and Bottom now had the head of an ass, or donkey.

Bottom declaimed, “If I were handsome, Thisby, I would still be only yours.”

Quince saw Bottom’s ass’ head and shouted, “Oh, monstrous! Oh, strange! We are haunted! Flee from here, friends! Help!”

The craftsmen, with the exception of Bottom, ran away.

Puck was happy to add to the excitement of the fleeing craftsmen, especially since it involved shape-shifting: “I’ll follow you, I’ll lead you roundabout, through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier. Sometimes a horse I’ll be, sometimes a hound, a hog, or a headless bear, sometimes a fire; and I will neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn, like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.”

Bottom asked himself, “Why do they run away? They are playing a joke on me and trying to make me afraid and trying to make an ass of me.”

Snout, trying to escape from one of Puck's transformations, almost ran over Bottom. He stopped long enough to say, "Oh, Bottom, you have changed! What do I see on you?"

"What do you see?" Bottom said, "You see an ass' head of your own, do you?"

Snout ran away, but Quince took his place and said, "Heaven help you, Bottom! You are translated."

Had Flute been present and unpanicked, he would have thought, *Quince meant to say "transformed."*

Bottom said to himself, "I see their knavery. They are playing a joke on me to make an ass of me. They are trying to frighten me if they can. But I will not move from this place — let them do whatever they can. I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, so that they shall hear that I am not afraid."

He sang, "*The blackbird so black of hue,*

*"With its orange-tawny bill,*

*"The song thrush with his note so true,*

*"The wren with its little trill —"*

Hearing Bottom sing, the fairy Queen Titania woke up, looked at him, and said, "What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?"

Bottom continued to sing:

*"The finch, the sparrow and the lark,*

*"The plain-song cuckoo gray,*

*"Whose note full many a man does note,*

*"And dares not answer nay —"*

Bottom thought a moment, and then he said to himself, "Why would anyone be so foolish as to answer a foolish cuckoo? The cuckoo calls a man a cuckold. A cuckold is a man whose wife cheats on him. By answering the cuckoo, the man would show that he was paying attention to what the cuckoo called out. It is as if the cuckoo were talking to him and letting him know that he is a cuckold. It is best to ignore the cuckoo so that other people think that the cuckoo is talking to some other man."

Titania said, "I beg you, gentle mortal, please sing again. My ears are much enamored of your notes, and my eyes are much enthralled by your shape. The power of your beauty moves me at first sight to say — no, to swear — that I love you."

Titania tossed her hair, pulled her shoulders back, and pushed her chest forward. She twisted her torso from right to left and back to show off her breasts from different angles, and she giggled. Suddenly, the fairy Queen was acting like a fourteen-year-old — or older — mortal girl who had found "true love."

Bottom, the most foolish of men, now said the most wise of words: "I think, lady, you have little reason to say that, and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together

nowadays.”

He thought, *Occasionally, I can say exactly the right words.*

Then he said, “It’s a pity that some respectable neighbors will not make them friends.”

He thought, *Occasionally, I can make a good jest.*

Titania said, “You are as wise as you are beautiful.”

“I deny that,” Bottom said, “but if I had wit enough to get out of this forest, I would have wit enough for me.”

“Out of this forest, do not desire to go,” Titania said. “You shall remain here, whether you want to stay or go. I am a spirit of no common rate — the summer serves me and my estate — and I do love you. Therefore, go with me. I will give you fairies to be your servants, and they shall fetch you jewels from the deep, and sing while you on pressed flowers do sleep, and I will purge your mortal body so that you shall like an airy spirit go.”

Titania called some elves: “Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Mote! Mustardseed!”

Peaseblossom said, “I am ready to do your will.”

Cobweb said, “So am I.”

Mote said, “So am I.”

Mustardseed said, “So am I.”

All asked, “What do you want us to do?”

Titania replied, “Elves, be kind and courteous to this gentleman. Go with him wherever he walks, and dance for him. Feed him with apricots and dewberries, with purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries. Steal the honey bags from the bumblebees. Steal beeswax from them and use glowworms to light the wax and make candles so that my love can see to go to bed and to arise. Pluck the wings from beautiful butterflies to fan the Moonbeams from his sleeping eyes. Bow to him, and curtsy, my elves.”

Peaseblossom said, “Welcome, mortal!”

Cobweb said, “Welcome!”

Mote said, “Welcome!”

Mustardseed said, “Welcome!”

“I beg your pardon, elves,” Bottom said. He asked one elf, “What is your name?”

“Cobweb.”

Bottom joked, “Cobwebs are used to stop the bleeding from small cuts, so if I cut my finger, I shall become better acquainted with you.”

He asked another elf, “Your name, honest gentleman?”

“Peaseblossom.”

Bottom joked, "Please give my regards to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall also become better acquainted with you."

He asked another elf, "What is your name, please, sir?"

"Mustardseed."

Bottom joked, "Beef is often eaten with mustard. I promise you that your relatives have many times made my eyes water. I shall also become better acquainted with you, good Master Mustardseed."

"Be my love's servants," Titania said to the fairies. "Lead him to my bed. The Moon, I think, looks sad and tearful. And when the Moon weeps, every little flower weeps. The flowers lament chastity — either the chastity of those who want to lose it but cannot or the chastity of those who want to keep it but cannot. Tie up my love's tongue — cover his mouth — and bring him to my bed silently."

— 3.2 —

In another part of the forest, Oberon said to himself, "I wonder whether Titania has awakened, and I wonder what living thing it was that first she saw — that is the thing that she must love fiercely."

Puck flew to Oberon, who said, "Welcome back, Puck. How now, mad spirit! What night sports are going on now about this much-populated forest?"

Puck replied, "Titania with a monster is in love. Near to her secret and consecrated bower, while she was in her dull and sleeping hour, a crew of fools, ignorant craftsmen, who work in Athens, met together to rehearse a play intended for great Theseus' wedding day. The most foolish of all those actors, who played the part of Pyramus, exited the 'stage' and entered a thicket, and there I played a joke on his thick head, on which I placed an ass' head. He returned to Thisby to talk, and when his fellow actors did him spy, they scattered as do geese whom hunters stalk. At the sound of a gun, geese and jackdaws rise in the sky, and in the forest the actors did fly as they scattered and fled. Over a stump an actor fell and rolled and cried 'Murder' and called for help from Athens. Their strong fears conquered their weak minds, and they became afraid of bushes and vines, for briers and thorns at their clothing snatched, and from some actors hats and from other actors sleeves caught. I led the actors on in this distracted fear, and left foolish Pyramus transformed there. At that moment, so it came to pass, Titania woke up and loved an ass."

"This has turned out better than I could have planned," Oberon said. "But have you yet put the juice of the flower upon the Athenian's eyelids as I ordered you to do?"

"I did that while he was sleeping," Puck replied, "so that is done, too. The Athenian woman was by his side, and so, when he wakes up, by him she must be eyed."

Hermia and Demetrius ran onto the scene, and Oberon and Puck made themselves invisible.

"Here comes the Athenian man," Oberon said.

"This is the woman I saw, but I have never seen this man," Puck said.

Demetrius said, "Why do you rebuke me when I love you so? You should be this bitter to your bitter foe."

Hermia replied, "My rebuke of you is now gentle, but it can become much worse. I am afraid that you may have given me reason enough you to curse. If you have slain Lysander in his sleep, you are up to your ankles in blood, and you might as well wade into a deep ocean of blood and kill me, too."

She added, "Lysander is more faithful to me than the Sun is to the day. Would Lysander from his sleeping Hermia have stolen away? I will sooner believe that the Earth has a hole bored through it and the Moon has passed through the hole and has come out on the other side of the Earth to disrupt the tides and annoy her brother, the Sun. You must have murdered Lysander. You even look like a murderer: deadly and grim."

"The murdered should look dead and grim," Demetrius said, "and that is how I should look. Your stern cruelty has pierced me through the heart, yet you, my murderer, look as bright, as clear, as yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere."

"What do your words have to do with Lysander?" Hermia asked. "What have you done with him? Where is he? Demetrius, will you give him back to me?"

"I prefer to give his carcass to my hounds."

"Go away, dog! Go away, cur! You have driven me past the bounds of a maiden's patience! Have you murdered Lysander? If so, then from here on never be thought to be a man! Just for once, tell me the truth. Do it for my sake! Would you have been capable of even looking at him when he was awake? Did you kill him while he was asleep? How brave! Could not a poisonous snake that way behave? You are the snake who murdered Lysander. You, Demetrius, have a tongue that is more forked than that of any biting snake."

"You are angry at the wrong person," Demetrius said. "I am not guilty of killing Lysander. He is still alive, for all that I can tell."

"Please tell me then that he is well."

"And if I could, what should I get therefore?"

"The privilege never to see me more. From your hated presence I now part. See me no more, whether Lysander is dead or not."

Hermia ran away from Demetrius.

"There is no use following her when she is in this fierce vein," Demetrius said. "Here therefore for a while I will remain. The heaviness of my sorrow grows even heavier because I have lost sleep due to my woe. Because of my sorrow, I am owed a debt by sleep. Here for a while I will stay, and some of that debt sleep shall repay."

Demetrius lay on the ground and slept.

"What have you done!" Oberon said to Puck. "You were mistaken quite, and you laid the love-juice on some true love's sight. Because of your mistake, that which ensued is a true love turned false and not a false love turned true."

“Fate is at fault, not I,” Puck said. “In this world, for every man who is faithful to his lover, a million fail, breaking oath on oath.”

“Throughout the forest, go swifter than the wind, no matter how much your path may wind, and Helena of Athens make sure you find,” Oberon ordered. “All lovesick she is and lacks good cheer; she makes sighs of love that cost her dear. By some illusion, bring her here. I’ll charm Demetrius’ eyes in preparation for when she does appear.”

“I go! I go! Look how I go, swifter than an arrow from a Tartar’s bow.”

Puck flew swiftly away.

Oberon squeezed the flower, and let the juice drip onto Demetrius’ sleeping eyelids, saying, “Flower of this purple dye, hit with Cupid’s arrow, make Helena the apple of his eye. When his love he do espy, let her shine as gloriously as does Venus in the sky.”

Oberon then said to Demetrius, “When you awake, may Helena be by. Sincerely beg her to love you — do not lie.”

Puck returned and said, “Captain of our fairy band, Helena is here at hand, and the youth, mistook by me, pleading for a lover’s fee. Shall we their foolish pageant see? Lord, what fools these mortals be!”

“Stand back,” Oberon said. “The noise that Helena and Lysander make will awaken Demetrius.”

Delighted, Puck said, “Then will two at the same time woo one, and that will make good fun. All the things that best please me are those that happen preposterously.”

Lysander and Helena walked near Demetrius.

Lysander pleaded, “Why should you think that I woo you in scorn? Tears never accompany scorn and derision. Look, when I vow that I love you, I weep; and vows so born and accompanied with tears are known to be true. How can my tears seem like scorn to you, when they are evidence that shows that I am true?”

“Your words grow trickier and trickier,” Helena said. “When someone misuses the truth and uses one truth to kill another truth, then there is a battle between a devil and an angel. These vows you make to me belong to Hermia. Have you forgotten her? If you weigh the oaths you now make to me and the oaths you have made to her, they will weigh exactly the same. Neither scale will outweigh the other, and both scales will be full of lies.”

“I lacked sound judgment when I swore to Hermia that I loved her,” Lysander said.

“And I think that you lack good judgment now that you have forgotten her,” Helena replied.

“Demetrius loves her, and he does not love you,” Lysander said loudly.

Demetrius awoke, saw Helena, and said, “Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine! To what, my love, shall I compare your eyes? Crystal is muddy compared to them. How ripe in show do your lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow! That newly fallen white, high mountain snow, fanned by the Eastern wind, turns the color of a crow when compared to the color of your hand. Let me your hand kiss, which is that of a princess of pure white and a promise of bliss!”

Helena said, "Oh, spite! Oh, Hell! I see you all are bent to join against me for your merriment. If you were civilized and understood courtesy, you would not do to me all this injury. I know that you hate me, indeed I do, but why must you join together to mock me, too? If you were men, as men you are in show, you would not treat a gentle lady so. You vow and swear that you do love me, and you superpraise my parts, but I know that you two hate me with all your hearts. You men both are rivals, and both of you love Hermia. And you are both rivals in mocking me. This is a 'splendid' exploit, a 'manly' enterprise, done to conjure tears up in a poor maiden's eyes so at her you can laugh! No one of a noble sort would so offend a virgin, and extort the patience of a maiden, all to make you laugh."

"You are unkind, Demetrius," Lysander said. "Be not so. You love Hermia; this you know I know. And here, with all good will, with all my heart, all of Hermia's love for me I yield up to you. So give to me all of Helena's love for you — grant me my request. Helena is the woman whom I love and will love until my death."

Disgusted, Helena said, "Never did mockers waste more idle breath."

Demetrius said, "Lysander, keep your Hermia. I do not want her. If ever I was of her fond, all of that love is gone. When I gave my heart to her, my heart was like a guest travelling away from its domain. But now my heart has returned home to Helena, and there it shall remain."

"Helena, he lies," Lysander said. "Do not believe him."

"Do not disparage a love to which you cannot come near, or you will regret it," Demetrius said. "But, look, here comes your dear."

Hermia arrived on the scene, saw Lysander, and said to him, "Dark night, that from the eyes sight away takes, the ears more keen of hearing makes. Although night does impair the seeing sense, it pays the hearing sense a double recompense. Not by my eyes have I you, Lysander, found; instead, my ears brought to me your voice's sound, but why did you unkindly leave me so?"

"Why should I stay, when love did press me to go?"

"What love could take Lysander from my side?"

"Lysander's love would not let him stay by your side," Lysander said. "I love beautiful Helena, who more enlightens the night than the Moon and the stars that are the eyes of light in the night. Why did you try to find me? Didn't my leaving you let you know that I hate you?"

"You cannot be saying the truth!" Hermia said. "You cannot mean what you say!"

Helena was certain that Hermia was mocking her: "Lo, Hermia is one of this confederacy! Now I see that they have planned all three to fashion this false trick to spite me! Insulting Hermia! Most ungrateful maiden! Why have you conspired, why have you with these two men contrived to mock me with this foul derision? Is all the talk that we two have shared, the vows to be like sisters, the hours that we have spent together never wishing to be parted — have you forgotten all of that? Have you forgotten all our school days of friendship and of childhood innocence? We, Hermia, like two artists working together, have with our needles created both one flower as we both worked on one sampler, sitting on one cushion, singing one song, both in one key, as if our hands, our sides, our voices, and our minds had been those of one person. So we grew together, like a double cherry, two cherries on one stem, seeming to be parted, but

yet united. Likewise, in appearance we had two bodies, but yet we had only one heart. We were like a coat of arms that represented two people. Are you willing to tear apart our long-time friendship by joining with these two men in mocking me? Doing that is not friendly, and it is not maidenly. The entire female sex, as well as me, may rebuke you for it, even though I alone do feel the injury.”

“I am amazed at your passionate words,” Hermia replied. “I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.”

“Haven’t you persuaded Lysander to mock me, to follow me, and to praise my eyes and face?” Helena asked. “And haven’t you persuaded your other love, Demetrius, who recently threatened to kick me, to call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare, precious and celestial? Who would speak these things to a woman he hates? And why does Lysander deny his love of you, so rich within his soul, and tender me affection, unless you made him do it? I am not as much in favor as you, or as loved, or as fortunate; instead, I am miserable because I, who love, am unloved. You should pity me, not despise me.”

“I don’t understand what you mean by this,” Hermia replied.

“Go on, continue to counterfeit serious looks, make faces at me when I turn my back, wink at each other, and keep up this joke. If you carry it out well, this joke will be talked about for years. If you have any pity, grace, or manners, you would not make me such a butt of your joke. But farewell. I am the butt of your joke partly because I followed all of you here, but my death or my absence shall soon remedy that.”

“Stay, gentle Helena; hear my plea to you,” Lysander said. “You are my love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!”

“Don’t you ever stop?” Helena said.

Hermia said to Lysander, “Dear, do not mock her so.”

Demetrius said to Lysander, “If she cannot persuade you to stop mocking Helena, I can force you to stop mocking her.”

“Neither you nor she can stop me from worshipping Helena,” Lysander said to Demetrius. “Your threats have no more strength than Hermia’s weak requests.”

Lysander then said, “Helena, I love you. I swear it by my life. I swear by that which I will lose for you, to prove him false who says that I do not love you.”

Demetrius said to Helena, “I say that I love you more than he can do.”

“If you say you do,” Lysander said, “come and fight me and prove your words are true.”

“Let’s do it!” Demetrius said.

Hermia asked, “Lysander, what is going on?”

She grabbed Lysander and held on to him, preventing him from leaving to fight Demetrius.

Lysander shouted at her, “Go, away, you addict to tanning beds!”

This society preferred light skin to dark skin.

“Lysander is not serious about fighting me,” Demetrius said. “He will put on an act, storm and shout, pretend to want to leave to fight me, but find an excuse the fight to back out.”

He said to Lysander, “You’re only half a man.”

Lysander yelled at Hermia, “Let go of me, you cat, you burr! You vile thing, let loose, or I will shake you from me like a serpent!”

“Why are you grown so violent?” Hermia asked him. “Why have you changed, darling —”

“Don’t ‘darling’ me!” Lysander raged. “Get away from me, tawny tabby! Get away from me, loathed medicine! Hated potion, get away from me!”

“You must be joking!” Hermia said to Lysander.

“He is,” Helena said, “and you are also joking.”

“Demetrius, I will keep my word and fight you,” Lysander said.

“Would you like to bet?” Demetrius said. “Hermia has her arms around you and is preventing you from leaving with me and fighting me. It looks to me as if you aren’t fighting very hard to get away from Hermia.”

“Should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?” Lysander replied. “Although I hate her, I’ll not harm a hair of her head.”

“Can you do me any greater harm than to hate me?” Hermia asked Lysander. “Why should you hate me? Why? Aren’t I Hermia? Aren’t you Lysander? I am as pretty now as I was a while ago. When the night began, you loved me, but since the night began you left me. Why did you leave me? Did you really mean to leave me?”

“Yes, I did,” Lysander said, “and I hoped to never see you again. Therefore, be out of hope, of question, of doubt; instead, be certain that nothing is truer than that it is no joke that I do hate you and I do love Helena.”

Hermia turned her attention to Helena: “You trickster! You thief of love! You boyfriend-stealer! You have come to this forest this night and stolen the man I love!”

“Have you no modesty, no maidenly shame, no touch of bashfulness?” Helena asked. “Will you tear answers from my throat before I have a chance to speak? You are not a real woman! You are a counterfeit! You are a puppet!”

“A puppet!” Hermia shouted. “Now I understand what is going on. Helena has used her height to steal my boyfriend. Helena has compared her height, her tall height, to my shortness, and now my Lysander belongs to her.”

She shouted at Helena, “And are you grown so high in Lysander’s esteem because I am so dwarfish and so low? How low am I, you tall painted maypole? Tell me: How low am I? I may be short, but my fingernails can still reach your eyes!”

Helena was afraid: “Please, although you are mocking me, gentlemen, let her not hurt me. I was never assertive. I have no gift for standing up for myself. My reputation for cowardice is well deserved. Don’t let her hit me. You perhaps may think that because she is somewhat shorter than myself, that I am a match for her, but I am not.”

“Shorter!” Hermia shouted. “Do you have to keep saying that I am short?”

Helena replied, “Good Hermia, do not be so angry at me. I always did love you, Hermia. I always kept your secrets, and I have never wronged you, except that, because I love Demetrius, I told him of your flight into this forest. He followed you, and because I love him I followed him. But he has been angry at me and threatened me. He has threatened to strike me, spurn me, and even to kill me. And now, if you will let me, a fool, quietly go, I will return to Athens and follow you no further. Please, let me go. I am a simple and foolish woman.”

Still angry, Hermia said, “Why, get you gone! What is stopping you?”

“A foolish heart,” Helena said, “but I will leave it here.”

“What, with Lysander?” Hermia shouted.

“No, with Demetrius.”

“Helena, be not afraid,” Lysander said, “Hermia shall not harm you.”

“No, she won’t,” Demetrius said, “not even if Lysander here is on Hermia’s side.”

Still afraid, Helena said, “When she’s angry, she is keen and sharp-tongued! She was sometimes a mean girl when she was in school, and though she be but little, she is fierce.”

“‘Little’ again!” Hermia complained. “She keeps calling me ‘low’ and ‘little.’ Why do you men allow her to say such things about me? You won’t do anything about it, but I will!”

Hermia let go of Lysander and started toward Helena, but Lysander and Demetrius quickly blocked her way.

Lysander said to her, “Go away, you dwarf, you minimus, you user of growth-stunting tobacco, you bead, you acorn.”

“You are too ready to rise to the defense of a woman who scorns your service,” Demetrius said to Lysander. “Let Helena alone. Don’t talk about her. Don’t try to ‘help’ her. If you continue to pretend to show even a little interest in her, you shall regret it.”

“Hermia has let go of me and is not preventing me from leaving,” Lysander said. “Follow me, if you dare, and fight me to see who gets Helena.”

“Follow you!” Demetrius said. “No, I will walk beside you, cheek by jowl.”

The two men departed, leaving Helena and Hermia alone.

“You are the cause of all this turmoil,” Hermia said, walking toward Helena, who backed away from her. “Don’t back away from me.”

“I will not trust you enough to let you close to me,” Helena said, “and I will no longer stay in your cursed company. Your hands are quicker than mine for a fray. My legs are longer, though, to run away.”

Helena ran away.

Confused by recent events, Hermia said, “I am amazed and know not what to say.”

Hermia then ran after Helena.

“All of this is your fault,” Oberon said to Puck. “You keep making accidental mistakes, or perhaps, you make your mistakes accidentally on purpose.”

“Believe me, King of shadows, these mistakes are accidental,” Puck said. “Didn’t you tell me I should know the man by the Athenian clothing he had on? And so far blameless proves my enterprise, that I have anointed an Athenian’s eyes. Still, I am glad events did so pass because this their arguing I think is worth a laugh.”

“Let’s make things right,” Oberon said. “The two male lovers are seeking a place to fight. Therefore, Robin Goodfellow, make overcast the night. Make fog dim the starry sky and lead these testy rivals so astray that one comes not within the other’s way. Similar to Lysander’s sometimes make your tongue, and then make Demetrius angry — for you that should be fun. Sometimes shout in the voice of Demetrius and use these lovers’ voices to lead each lover away from the other. Keep them seeking each other until over their brows death-like sleep with leaden legs and bat-like wings does creep. When they are asleep, then squeeze the juice of this herbal antidote onto Lysander’s eyelids. The juice will make everything all right. It has the power to take from him all error with his sight, and make him love again Hermia, thus ending his and her plight. When the lovers — male and female — next awake, all this night’s derision shall seem like a dream and fruitless vision, and back to Athens shall the lovers wend, matched correctly with a love that shall never end.”

He added, “While I in this affair do you employ, I will go to my Queen and ask for her boy who comes from the East, and then I will release her charmed eyes from loving a monster, and reigning again shall be peace.”

“My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,” Puck said. “The dragons that draw the chariot of night are nearing their home, and in the East I see the morning star, at whose approach ghosts, wandering here and far, go home to their churchyards. Other damned spirits, those of suicides who were buried at crossroads and those of people who drowned in floods and whose bodies were never recovered, already to their wormy beds have gone for fear that day should look upon them — they willfully exile themselves from light and must forever consort with black-browed night.”

“But we are spirits of another sort,” Oberon said, “I in the morning’s light have often made sport. Far from being driven away by the coming of day, we fairy spirits are able to enjoy it and stay, although we prefer the Moonlit night to the morning light. Like the keeper of a royal forest, I often tread the groves until the full morning Sunlight, all fiery red, shines down on the ocean with fair blessed beams, and turns into yellow gold the ocean’s salty green streams. Nevertheless, Puck, act quickly and make no delay. We may be able to set everything to rights before day.”

Oberon flew away to go to Titania.

“Up and down, up and down, I will lead them up and down. I am feared in field and town,” Puck said. “Robin Hobgoblin, lead them up and down. Here comes one.”

Lysander came near and shouted, “Where are you, proud Demetrius? Speak up now!”

In Demetrius’ voice, Puck shouted, “Here I am, villain. My sword is drawn and ready. Where are you?”

“I will be with you immediately.”

In Demetrius' voice, Puck replied, "Follow me, then, to leveler ground so we can fight."

Lysander left, following — he thought — Demetrius' voice.

Demetrius came near and shouted, "Lysander, speak again! You runaway, you coward, have you fled? Speak! Are you cowering in some bush? Where are you hiding your head?"

Puck shouted in Lysander's voice, "You coward, you are bragging to the stars and telling the bushes that you are looking for me near and far, yet you will not come and fight me. Come, coward! Come, child! I'll whip you with a rod. Anyone who draws a sword on you is defiled."

Demetrius shouted, "Where are you?"

Puck shouted in Lysander's voice, "Follow my voice. This is not a good place to fight."

They left, but soon Lysander returned, stumbled in the darkness, and complained, "He goes before me and continuously dares me to come on, but when I come to where he called, then he is gone. The villain is much lighter-heeled than me. I followed fast, but faster he did flee. I am fallen into a dark uneven way, and here will I rest myself and stay."

He lay down and said, "Come, gentle day! Once you show me your light, I will find Demetrius and get revenge for this spite."

He slept.

Soon, Puck led Demetrius near Lysander.

Puck shouted in Lysander's voice, "Coward, why are you avoiding me?"

"Wait for me, if you dare," Demetrius shouted. "I know well that you are running away from me. You keep changing your position, and you dare not stay in one place and look me in the face. Where are you now?"

"Come here," Puck shouted in Lysander's voice. "Here I am."

"Not for long," Demetrius said. "You will be gone by the time I get there and so you do me wrong. You shall dearly pay for mocking me this night if ever I see your face in daylight. Now, go your way. I am tired, and on this cold ground I will make my bed. When morning arrives, expect me to break your head."

He lay on the ground and slept.

Helena arrived and complained, "Oh, weary night! Oh, long and tedious night, make your hours shorter! May dawn soon shine in the East so that I may go back to Athens by daylight and escape my former friends who now detest me. Sleep, who for a time stops sorrow, keep me from my misery."

Helena lay on the ground and slept.

Puck said, "Yet but three? I need one more — two of both kinds make up four. Here she comes, cursed and sad. Cupid is a knavish lad, thus to make poor females mad."

Hermia arrived and complained, "I have been never so weary, never so in woe. Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers, I can no further crawl, no further go. My legs cannot keep pace

with my desires. Here will I rest until the break of light. May Heaven protect Lysander if there is a fight!”

Hermia lay on the ground and slept.

Puck said to all four lovers, “On the ground, sleep sound.”

To Lysander, he said, “I’ll apply to your eyes, gentle lover, something that will make you truly love the one you should love when her you spy.”

Puck squeezed the juice of the herbal antidote onto Lysander’s sleeping eyelids, and then he said, “When you wake, you will take true delight in the sight of your former lady’s eyes. And the country proverb by all men known, that every man should have his own, in your waking shall be shown. Jack shall have Jill; nothing shall go ill, and each man and woman shall be matched well.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

In another part of the forest, Titania entertained Bottom. Many other fairies, including Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mote, and Mustardseed, were also present. Oberon watched from a position where he was unseen.

Titania said to Bottom, who was enjoying himself, “Come, sit down upon this flowery bed, while I your lovely cheeks caress, and stick musk-roses in the hair of your sleek, smooth head, and kiss your beautiful, large ears, my gentle joy and boy-toy.”

Bottom asked, “Where’s Peaseblossom?”

“Here I am.”

“Scratch my head, please, Peaseblossom. Where’s Monsieur Cobweb?”

“Here I am.”

“Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, please get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped bumblebee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honeybag. Do not tire yourself too much doing this, monsieur; and, good monsieur, be careful not to break the honeybag; I would hate for you to be covered with honey. Where’s Monsieur Mustardseed?”

“Here I am,” he said, bowing repeatedly.

“Shake hands with me, Monsieur Mustardseed, and please stop bowing, good monsieur.”

“What can I do for you?”

“Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalier Cobweb to scratch my head. I must go to the barber soon, monsieur; for I think that I am marvelously hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.”

“Would you like to hear some music, my sweet love?” Titania asked Bottom.

“I have a reasonably good ear in music,” Bottom replied. “Let’s have something with lots of clacking and clapping.”

“Or would you prefer something sweet to eat?”

“I could peck at a pound of provender. I could munch a bunch of good dry oats. I have a great desire to eat a bundle of hay — good hay, sweet hay, has no equal.”

“I will have a venturesome fairy seek a squirrel’s hoard, and he will fetch you new nuts.”

“I prefer to eat a handful or two of dried peas,” Bottom said, “but, please, let none of your people disturb me, for now an exposition for sleep has come upon me.”

“You mean a disposition for sleep, dear,” Titania said. “You sleep, and I will hold you in my arms. Fairies, go now, and stay away for a while.”

The fairies departed, and Titania said to Bottom, who was now asleep. "I will hold you in my arms the way that sweet honeysuckle gently twists itself around the strong trunk of an elm. How I love you!"

Titania fell asleep beside the sleeping Bottom.

Puck arrived, and Oberon said, "Welcome, Robin Goodfellow. Do you see this sweet sight? I begin to pity her lovesickness now. I recently met with her as she was seeking treats for this silly fool, and I scolded her because of the silly way she was acting. She had placed on this ass' head a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers. Drops of dew, which sometimes appear on buds and swell like round and lustrous pearls, were on the coronet, standing in the pretty flowerets' eyes like tears that did their own disgrace bewail. After I had scolded her, Titania with mild words spoke to me. I then did ask her to give me the changeling child, and immediately she gave him to me and sent a fairy to bear him to my bower in Fairyland."

Oberon added, "Now that I have the boy, I will undo this hateful imperfection of Titania's eyes. And, gentle Puck, take this ass' head off this Athenian fool, so that, when he awakens when the other Athenians do, they may all go back to Athens and think that this night's incidents are only a disconcerting dream. But first I will release the fairy Queen."

He squeezed the juice of the herbal antidote onto Titania's sleeping eyelids and said, "Be as you used to be; see as you used to see. Blessed be Diana, the Moon-goddess. Diana's herb over Cupid's flower has such force and blessed power. Now, my Titania, wake up, my sweet Queen."

Titania, who thought that she had been dreaming, was happy to see Oberon, her husband: "My Oberon! What visions have I seen! I dreamed that I loved an ass!"

Oberon gestured toward the sleeping Bottom and said, "There lies your love."

Titania looked down and beside her, saw Bottom, and was shocked: "How came this thing to pass? Oh, how I hate now to look at this ass!"

Like many, many mortal women in similar positions, Titania thought, *What was I thinking!*

Oberon said to Titania, "We will talk about this later."

To Puck, he said, "Robin, take off this ass' head."

To Titania, he said, "Call for magical music that will make these five sleeping mortals sleep the deepest sleep."

Titania ordered, "Music! Music that will charm mortals and make them sleep so deep!"

Music began to play.

Puck removed the ass' head from Bottom and said to him, "When you wake up, you will not see with this ass' eyes — you will see with your own ass' eyes."

Oberon said, "Come, my Queen, hold hands with me, and we will dance on the ground where these sleepers be."

They danced and then Oberon said to Titania, "Now you and I newly enjoy amity, and we will tomorrow at midnight ceremoniously dance in Duke Theseus' house joyfully. We shall bless

his house with prosperity and there shall these four lovers wedded be, along with Theseus and Hippolyta, happily.”

Puck said, “Fairy King, hark — I do hear the morning lark.”

Oberon said to Titania, “My Queen, you who sit quietly thinking, we can run toward and rejoice the night soon. We can fly around the globe quickly, swifter than the wandering Moon.”

Titania replied, “During our flight, tell me how it came this night that I sleeping here was found with these mortals on the ground.”

The fairies flew away.

Hunting horns sounded in the distance. Theseus was taking Hippolyta hunting, a good entertainment for an Amazon. Egeus and others also participated in the hunt.

Theseus said, “Go, one of you, find the forester. We have finished our ceremony of the rites of May, and since we are still in the morning of this day, Hippolyta, whom I love, shall hear the music of my hounds. Tell him to unleash the hounds in the western valley and let them bound.”

An attendant left to find the forester.

Theseus said to Hippolyta, “We will, fair Queen, go up to the mountain’s top, and listen to the music of my hounds and the mountain’s echoes.”

Hippolyta enjoyed this kind of entertainment: “I was with Hercules and Cadmus once, when in a forest of Crete their hounds of Sparta brought to bay a bear. Never did I hear such gallant music — the groves, the skies, the waterfalls, and the echoes of every region nearby seemed to be all filled with one mutual cry. I never heard so musical a sound — it was such sweet thunder.”

Theseus said, “My hounds have been bred from Spartan dams and sires. They have the Spartan hounds’ hanging cheeks and sandy color. From their heads hang ears that sweep away the morning dew. They are crooked-kneed and dew-lapped like Thessalian bulls. Slow in pursuit they may be, but they are matched in mouth like bells of harmonious tones to create a tuneful melody of the hunt. The hunting pack creates a cry more melodious and beautiful than any ever created with human voice or with hunting horn — not even in Crete, in Sparta, or in Thessaly. You may judge for yourself when you hear their cries.”

Theseus caught sight of some bodies lying together on the edge of the forest and asked, “What nymphs are these?”

Egeus rode over to Theseus and said, “My lord, this is my daughter here asleep, and this man is Lysander. This man is Demetrius, and here is Helena, the daughter of old Nedar. I wonder how they came to be here together.”

“No doubt they rose up early to observe the rite of May,” Theseus said. “Knowing that we would be hunting here, they came here to watch. But, Egeus, isn’t this the day that Hermia should tell us whether or not she will marry Demetrius?”

“Yes, it is, my lord.”

Theseus ordered an attendant, “Go and tell the huntsmen to wake them with their horns.”

The attendant left to tell the huntsmen, and soon the huntsmen blew their horns loudly. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia all woke up.

Theseus joked, “Good morning, friends. Lovebirds are said to begin to mate on Saint Valentine’s Day, but Saint Valentine’s Day has passed. Do you lovebirds begin to couple only now?”

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” Lysander said.

“Please, young lovers, stand up,” Theseus said. “Lysander and Demetrius, I know that you are — or have been — enemies. How did your gentle concord — and concord it must be because you sleep by each other so peacefully — come into the world? How can two enemies sleep side by side with no fear of harm?”

“My lord, I shall reply perplexedly, half asleep and half awake,” Lysander replied. “I swear that I cannot truly say how I came here, but as I think — and truly would I speak — I believe that I came with Hermia so we could flee from out of the range of the harsh Athenian law.”

Egeus said, “Enough, enough. My lord, you have heard enough. I beg the law, the law, upon his head. Lysander and my daughter would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius, thereby have stolen from you and me. They would have stolen away your future wife and my right to choose the man whom my daughter will marry.”

Demetrius spoke up: “My lord, beautiful Helena told me of their plan and of their purpose in coming to this forest. Out of fury, I followed them, and out of love, Helena followed me. But, my good lord, I don’t know by what power — but by some power it has happened — my love for Hermia has melted like the snow. My love for Hermia seems to me now like the memory of a worthless trinket that I loved when I was a child. Now, I love only Helena. Only she is the object and the pleasure of my eye. All the faith and all the virtue of my heart are for Helena alone. I was engaged to marry her, my lord, before I ever saw Hermia. But somehow, as if I were ill, this food I had loved I came to hate. But now I am like a person restored to health and his natural taste, and I long for that food. Now I do wish for Helena, love Helena, long for Helena, and will for evermore be true to Helena.”

“Lovers, this is a fortunate meeting,” Theseus said. “We will hear more about your experiences later.”

To Egeus, Theseus said, “Earlier, I said that I can by no means extenuate the law of Athens, but I do exactly that now. Egeus, I do overrule your will. Your daughter shall marry Lysander, and Helena shall marry Demetrius. In the temple later this day, these couples shall eternally be knit, as shall be Hippolyta and me.”

Pleased at Theseus’ ruling, Hippolyta smiled.

Theseus said, “Now that the morning is nearly over, let’s stop our hunt. Let all of us, including the couples who will be married later, return to Athens. There, we will enjoy a festive feast.”

He turned to his betrothed and said, “Come, Hippolyta.”

Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and others departed, leaving behind Lysander and Hermia, and Demetrius and Helena.

“What happened last night?” Demetrius asked. “The events of last night seem far away and murky, like a distant mountain whose top is hidden by clouds.”

“I remember the events of last night as if I were seeing them with eyes unfocused and seeing double,” Hermia said.

“I remember the events the same way,” Helena said. “I have found Demetrius, but I have found him like I could find a jewel. The jewel is in my possession for now, but someone could come along and claim it as hers.”

“Are you sure that we are awake?” Demetrius asked. “It seems to me that yet we sleep and dream. Was the Duke really here, and did he tell us to follow him?”

“Yes,” Hermia said, “and my father was also here.”

“And Hippolyta,” Helena said.

“And the Duke really did tell us to follow him to the temple,” Lysander said.

“Why, then, we are awake,” Demetrius said. “Let’s follow the Duke, and as we walk let us tell each other our dreams.”

The four young lovers walked away, and Bottom, who had been sleeping at some distance from the lovers, woke up, saying, “When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next cue is ‘Most fair Pyramus.’”

Bottom looked around, saw no one, and called, “Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! Snug! My word, they have gone home and left me here asleep!”

He paused, thought, and said, “I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was — man is but an ass, if he would try to explain this dream. I thought I was — no man can tell what. I thought I was, and I thought I had — but a man would have to be a motley-wearing fool if he would try to say what I thought I had.”

Bottom felt the top of his head above both ears, and then he said, “The eye of man has not heard, the ear of man has not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue able to conceive, nor his heart able to report, what my dream was.”

Bottom thought, and then he said, “I will get Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream. It shall be called ‘Bottom’s Dream,’ because it has no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of our play, before the Duke. Perhaps, to show the ballet to better advantage, I shall sing it when Thisby dies.”

#### — 4.2 —

Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling were meeting in Peter Quince’s house in Athens.

Quince asked Starveling, “Have you sent anyone to Bottom’s house to ask about him? Has he come home yet?”

“No one has seen him,” Starveling replied. “No doubt, the fairies have carried him away.”

“If he cannot be found, then the play is ruined, isn’t it?” Flute said. “We cannot perform it, can we?”

“That would be impossible,” Quince replied. “In all of Athens, no one but Bottom can play the part of Pyramus.”

“That’s true,” Flute said. “Bottom has simply the best wit of all the craftsmen in Athens.”

“Yes, and he is the most handsome, too,” Quince said. “And he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.”

“You must say ‘paragon,’” Flute said. “A paramour is, God bless us, a wicked thing.”

Snug knocked on Quince’s door and entered the house and said, “Friends, the Duke is coming from the temple. He and Hippolyta have been married, and so have two other couples. If we had been able to put on our play, we would all have been made men — we would have received a pension for life.”

“Sweet friend Bottom!” Flute said. “I wish you were here! You would be able to earn for yourself a pension of sixpence a day for the rest of your life. I’ll be hanged if you would not have earned a pension of sixpence a day for playing Pyramus. Bottom would have deserved it, too. For playing Pyramus, he would have gotten sixpence a day — or nothing.”

Bottom now knocked on Quince’s door and entered the house, saying, “Where are these lads! Where are these good fellows! Hello, friends!”

“Bottom!” Quince said happily. “Oh, most courageous day! Oh, most happy hour!”

“Friends, I have wonders to recount,” Bottom said, “but do not ask me about them, for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian.”

He paused and then said, “I will tell you everything, exactly as it happened.”

“Let us hear, sweet Bottom,” Quince requested.

“I won’t say a word,” Bottom said, “but I will tell you that the Duke has dined. Get your costumes together. Get good strings to use to attach your false beards, and new ribbons to use to tie your shoes. Let us go to the palace right away. Every actor, look over your part. The long and the short of it is that our play is on a list of the entertainments that Theseus shall choose from to see. Let Thisby have clean linen, and let not him who plays the lion pare his fingernails, for they shall hang out for the lion’s claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions or garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath, and I have no doubt but that we shall hear the audience say, ‘It is a sweet comedy.’ Most important of all, adjust your testicles. No actor can perform competently unless the two stones in his pants are sitting comfortably. No more words, friends! Let’s go!”

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

In the palace, Theseus and Hippolyta were talking. Philostrate and others were also present.

Hippolyta said, “Theseus, these four lovers have talked of strange things.”

“I think that they have talked of things that are more strange than they are true,” Theseus replied. “I never believe old fables or fairy tales. Lovers and madmen have such frenzied brains, such fertile imaginations, that they see — or imagine that they see — much more than cool reason ever comprehends. The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are all made by imagination. The lunatic sees more devils than vast Hell can hold. The lover, just as frantic as the lunatic, sees the beauty of Helen of Troy in the dark face of an exotic dancer. The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, glances from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven. As imagination gives birth to things unknown, the poet’s pen writes them down as if they were real and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. A strong imagination tricks us. If a strong imagination senses some joy, it creates some bringer — perhaps a god — of that joy. At night, when someone senses some fear, how easy is a bush imagined to be a bear!”

“But the four lovers all told the same story of the night,” Hippolyta said. “Their stories agreed with each other, and that consistency to me is evidence that whatever happened — no matter how strange and to be wondered at — is more than imaginary fantasies.”

Lysander, Hermia, Demetrius, and Helena all walked into the great chamber.

Theseus said to Hippolyta, “Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.”

To the four lovers, he said, “Joy, gentle friends! May joy and the fresh days of love always accompany your hearts!”

“May more joy and more love always be found in your royal estates, at your table, and in your bed,” Lysander replied.

“Now, what entertainments — perhaps dancers, masked or unmasked — shall we enjoy?” Theseus said. “We have a long age of three hours to pass between now and our bedtime. Where is our usual manager of mirth? What revels are at hand? Is there no play to ease the anguish of a torturing hour? Call Philostrate.”

“Here I am, mighty Theseus,” Philostrate said.

“What entertainments to pass the time have you for this evening?” Theseus asked. “What masked dance? What music? How shall we quickly pass this slow-moving time, if not with some delightful entertainment?”

Philostrate handed Theseus a piece of paper and said, “Here is a list of the entertainments offered. Please choose which your highness will see first.”

Theseus read out loud, “‘*The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung by an Athenian eunuch accompanied by the harp.*’ We will have none of that, for the obvious reason. Beside, I have told my lovely Hippolyta that story in honor of my kinsman Hercules.

“‘*The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals, tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.*’ No, this will not do. This is an old entertainment. It was played when I from Thebes came most recently a conqueror.

“‘*The thrice three Muses mourning for the death of Learning, late deceased in beggary.*’ We will have none of that because it is some satire, keen and critical, hardly the thing to hear after a wedding ceremony.

“‘*A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.*’ Merry and tragical! Tedious and brief! You may as well talk about hot ice and similarly strange snow.”

Theseus asked Philostrate, “How shall we find the concord of this discord?”

Philostrate said, “A play there is, my lord, some ten words long, which is as brief as I have known a play; but by ten words, my lord, it is too long, which makes it tedious; for in all the play there is not one word apt or one player well cast. And tragical, my noble lord, it is, because Pyramus in the play does kill himself, which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess, made my eyes cry; but more merry tears the passion of loud laughter never shed.”

“Who are they who do play it?” Theseus asked.

“Men with calloused hands who work here in Athens,” Philostrate said. “They have never labored in their minds until now. They have taxed their unexercised brains to create this play to celebrate your wedding.”

“And we will hear it,” Theseus said.

“No, my noble lord,” Philostrate said. “It is not for you. I have seen the play, and it is nothing, nothing in the world. There is nothing in it to bring you pleasure, except perhaps that you may take pleasure in their good intentions and in how hard they have worked — and it has been hard work for them — to make this play and to learn their lines. All of this they have done to do you service.”

“I will hear that play,” Theseus said. “Nothing can be amiss when it is presented with sincerity and a sense of duty. Go, bring them in.”

Philostrate left, and Theseus said, “Please sit down, ladies.”

All sat down, but Hippolyta said, “Should we see this play? I don’t want to see working-class people attempt to do something that they are incapable of doing and embarrassing themselves when they are trying their best to serve you.”

“Why, gentle, sweet Hippolyta, you shall see no such thing,” Theseus said.

“But Philostrate says that they can do nothing right in this play.”

“Then the kinder we will be, to give them thanks for nothing,” Theseus said. “Our entertainment shall be to take as correctly done that in which they make mistakes. Whatever they cannot correctly do, we can generously judge their performance in accordance with their good intentions, not in accordance with their bad performance. In places where I have come, people have intended to greet me with premeditated welcomes. But I have seen them shiver and look pale, make periods in the midst of sentences, and throttle their practiced speeches because of their stage fright. I have seen them completely break down and be able to say

nothing. Objectively, they have not paid me a welcome. Trust me, sweet, out of this silence I have subjectively found a welcome. In their stage fright and modest and dutiful attempt to do what they could not but wished that they could, I have found as much welcome as I would from the rattling tongue of confident and bold eloquence. Love and tongue-tied innocence say much, I believe, although not in words.”

Philostrate returned and said, “So please your grace, the Prologue is ready.”

“Let him approach,” Theseus said.

Trumpets sounded, and Quince came on stage to say the prologue:

“If we offend, it is with our good will.

“That you should think, we come not to offend

“but with good will. To show our simple skill,

“that is the true beginning of our end.

“Consider then we come but in despite.

“We do not come as intending to content you,

“our true intent is. All for your delight

“we are not here. That you should here repent you,

“the actors are at hand and by their show

“you shall know all that you are likely to know.”

Theseus had said to Hippolyta that often people who intended to greet him would make periods in the midst of their sentences. Such was the case here. Quince had badly recited his prologue, and it had come out in a way that was insulting to the audience.

This is what Quince had meant to say:

“If we offend, it is with our good will

“that you should think we come, not to offend,

“but with good will to show our simple skill:

“That is the true beginning of our end.

“Consider then we come — but in despite

“we do not come — as intending to content you.

“Our true intent is all for your delight:

“We are not here that you should here repent you.

“The actors are at hand and by their show

“you shall know all that you are likely to know.”

Amused, Theseus laughed and said, “This speaker does not understand how to use periods at the ends of sentences.”

As he had said to Hippolyta, Theseus was able to find a subjective welcome where no objective welcome existed. If he were a different kind of ruler, he could have had Quince executed.

The other noble members of the audience followed Theseus’ lead: They were amused and not angry when they talked about Quince.

Lysander said, “He has ridden his prologue like a colt that is being broken. The colt does not know how to stop, and this speaker does not know to stop briefly at the ends of sentences. One can learn from this, my lord. It is not enough just to speak — one must also speak correctly.”

Even Hippolyta was amused: “Indeed he has played on his prologue like a child plays a flute that he is attempting to learn. The flute makes sounds, but it does not make music.”

“His speech was like a tangled chain,” Theseus said. “No link or word was broken, but the chain of links or words is all disordered.”

Theseus laughed and said, “Who is up next?”

While the royal members of the audience had been talking, Pyramus and Thisby, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion had come onstage. While Quince recited the next part of his prologue, the actors pantomimed their parts.

Quince recited, “Gentlepeople, perhaps you wonder at this show;

“but wonder on, until truth makes all things plain.

“This man is Pyramus, if you would like to know;

“this beauteous lady Thisby is not plain.

“This man, with limestone and cement, doth present

“Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;

“and through Wall’s chink, poor souls, they are content

“to whisper. At this let no man wonder.

“This man, with lantern, dog, and bushel of thorn,

“presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,

“by Moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

“to meet at Ninus’ tomb, where their love would grow.

“This grisly beast, whom Lion we do call,

“did scare away, or rather did affright;

“the trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

“and, as she fled, her mantle she let fall,

“which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
“Then comes Pyramus, a sweet youth and tall,  
“and finds his trusty Thisby’s mantle slain:  
“Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
“he bravely broached his boiling bloody breast;  
“and Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
“his dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
“let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
“at large discourse, while here they do remain.”

Theseus was amused by the bad poetry, and by Quince’s belief that the audience needed to be told the well-known plot of the play in advance.

In a good mood brought about by a wedding that was making him happy and by a bad play that was making him laugh, Theseus said, “I wonder if the lion will speak.”

Demetrius joked, “It will be no surprise if it does, my lord. One lion may speak, when many asses do.”

Once Quince, Thisby, Lion, and Moonshine had exited the stage, Wall said, “In this same interlude it doth befall

“that I, one Snout by name, present a Wall;  
“and such a Wall, as I would have you all think,  
“that had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
“through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
“did whisper often very secretly.  
“This clay, this cement, and this stone do show  
“that I am that same Wall; the truth is so:  
“and this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
“through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.”

Theseus joked, “Would you desire cement, plaster, and stone to speak better?”

Demetrius replied, “It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard speak, my lord.”

Bottom, playing Pyramus, strode onstage.

“Pyramus draws near the wall,” Theseus said. “Silence!”

Pyramus recited, “Oh, grim-looking night! Oh, night with hue so black!

“Oh, night, which ever art when day is not!

“Oh, night! Oh, night! Alack, alack, alack,

“I fear my Thisby’s promise is forgot!

“And thou, oh, Wall! Oh, sweet, oh, lovely Wall,

“That stands between her father’s ground and mine!

“Thou, Wall! Oh, Wall! Oh, sweet and lovely Wall,

“show me thy chink, to blink through with my eyne!”

Wall held up his fingers in an OK sign.

Pyramus continued, “Thanks, courteous Wall! Jove shield thee well for this!

“But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

“Oh, wicked Wall, through whom I see no bliss!

“Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!”

Theseus joked, “The Wall, I think, since it can talk, should curse Pyramus.”

Theseus had spoken too loudly.

Bottom overheard Theseus, and breaking character as well as taking an enormous liberty, he said to him, “No, in truth, sir, he should not. ‘Deceiving me’ is Thisby’s cue: She is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the Wall. You shall see; it will happen exactly as I have told you.”

Theseus nodded and then laughed at Bottom’s thinking that he needed to be told the story of Pyramus and Thisby. He also ignored the great liberty that a craftsman had taken in speaking to him, the ruler of Athens, without being spoken to first.

Bottom then said as Thisby walked onstage, “Yonder she comes.”

Flute, who was playing Thisby, had remembered Bottom’s earlier advice and had adjusted his two stones before coming onstage.

Thisby recited, “Oh, Wall, very often hast you heard my moans,

“for parting my fair Pyramus and me!

“My cherry lips have often kissed your stones,

“your stones with cement and hair knit up in thee.”

The males in the audience especially laughed at Thisby’s lines.

Helena understood the meaning of what was said a little later than the others, and she thought in shock, *Oh!*

Pyramus said, “I see a voice: now will I to the chink,

“to spy if I can hear my Thisby’s face. Thisby!”

Thisby replied, “My love thou art, my love, I think.”

Pyramus replied, “Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover’s grace;

“and, like Limander, am I trusty still.”

Theseus thought, *The mistakes multiply. ‘Thy lover’s grace’ means ‘thy gracious lover.’ Also, Pyramus means Leander, the lover of the woman named Hero, a priestess of Venus. Leander swam across the Hellespont each night to visit her. She lit a lamp each night to guide his way across the narrow sea. One night, the winds blew out Hero’s light, and Leander drowned. When Hero saw her lover’s dead body, she committed suicide.*

Thisby replied, “And I am faithful like Helen, until the Fates me kill.”

Theseus thought, *Thisby means ‘Hero,’ I hope. Helen of Troy will run away with Paris — she will be unfaithful to her husband, Menelaus. Of course, the Trojan War has not yet occurred, but I and many others in Athens have studied prophecies.*

Pyramus recited, “Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.”

Theseus thought, *He means Cephalus and Procris, two ancient lovers whose love ended tragically.*

Thisby replied, “As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.”

Theseus thought, *Cephalus ended up killing Procris, albeit accidentally. It’s also odd that Thisby would say this sentence because Cephalus was the man and Procris was the woman.*

Pyramus said, “Oh, kiss me through the hole of this vile Wall!”

They kissed — or attempted to.

Thisby said, “I kiss the Wall’s hole, not your lips at all.”

The males in the audience who had laughed at Thisby’s kissing the Wall’s stones laughed again.

Pyramus said, “Wilt thou at Ninny’s tomb meet me straightway?”

Thisby replied, “Come life, or come death, I come without delay.”

Pyramus and Thisby exited.

Wall said, “Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;

“and, being done, thus Wall away doth go.”

Wall exited.

“The lovers should have waited,” Theseus said. “The Wall that separated them is now down.”

“Waiting would not have helped,” Demetrius said. “The Wall would have stayed around to eavesdrop.”

“This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard,” Hippolyta said.

“Even the best plays and actors are but shadows,” Theseus said, “and the worst plays and actors are no worse than shadows, if we use our imaginations to improve them.”

“It must be your imagination that does the improving,” Hippolyta said. “The imaginations of this playwright and these actors have done little to make a good play.”

“If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men,” Theseus said.

Meanwhile, Moonshine and Lion had come onstage. Moonshine carried a lantern and a bushel of thorns, and he led a dog by a leash.

Theseus said, “Here come two noble beasts in: a man and a lion.”

Lion recited, “You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear

“the smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

“may now perchance both quake and tremble here,

“when Lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

“Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am

“a Lion fierce, and not any Lion’s Mam;

“for, if I should as Lion come in strife

“into this place, at risk would be my life.”

Theseus said, “I think the actor playing the Lion has mixed up his words. I think he meant to tell us that he is not a lion; instead, he has told us that he is not the mother of a lion. Still, this Lion is a very polite beast, and he acts morally and with a good conscience.”

“This is the most moral Lion that I have ever seen, my lord,” Demetrius said.

“This Lion is a very fox when it comes to courage,” Lysander said. “He is more sly than he is brave.”

“Yes, he is,” Theseus said, “and he is as discreet as a goose. He is more foolish than he is discreet.”

“I disagree, my lord,” Demetrius said. “His courage cannot carry away his discretion, and we all know that the fox carries away the goose.”

“I am sure that his discretion cannot carry away his courage,” Theseus said, “because we all know that the goose does not carry away the fox. But so be it. Let us leave the Lion to his discretion, and let us listen to the Moon.”

Moonshine, who had waited patiently for the nobles to stop talking, started to speak, “This lantern doth the horned Moon present —”

But the nobles were in a mood for making jokes, and they interrupted Moonshine. People who laugh often want to create more laughter.

“He should have worn the horns on his head,” Demetrius said. “Cuckolds have horns.”

People joked that a cuckold — a man with an unfaithful wife — had invisible horns on his head.

“A horned Moon has crescents,” Theseus said, “but this Moon has no visible crescents. Therefore, his horns must be invisible inside the circle that is the Moon.”

Moonshine again attempted to say his lines:

“This lantern doth the horned Moon present;

“Myself the Man in the Moon do seem to be.”

Theseus interrupted again, “This is the greatest error of all — the man should be inside the lantern. How else could he be the Man in the Moon?”

“He dares not go in the lantern because of the candle,” Demetrius said. “The candle is ready to be snuffed out, and he does not want to be snuffed out with it.”

Hippolyta joked, “I am weary of this Moon — I wish he would change!”

“The Moon appears to have but little light and so is waning,” Theseus said, “but we should be courteous and reasonable, and wait and see.”

Moonshine waited patiently.

“Proceed, Moon,” Lysander said.

Moonshine abandoned his poetic lines and said in prose, “All that I have to say is to tell you that the lantern is the Moon, I am the Man in the Moon, this thorn bush is my thorn bush, and this dog is my dog.”

“Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the Moon,” Demetrius said. “But silence! Here comes Thisby.”

Thisby came on onstage and said, “This is old Ninny’s tomb. Where is my love?”

The Lion roared, and Thisby screamed and ran offstage, dropping her mantle as she exited.

The Lion then got stage fright and froze. Neither the Lion nor Moonshine did or said anything.

Theseus thought, *This is the other thing that I told Hippolyta that people do when they speak to me. Some put periods in the middle of sentences, as happened during the Prologue of this play. Other people get stage fright and freeze, as is happening now.*

Theseus remembered that he ought to be courteous, as he had promised Hippolyta that he would be. The nobles felt bad that their humorous comments were having this effect on the actors. Knowing that one good reason for the Lion to get stage fright was the humorous comments that they had made to the Man in the Moon, which the Lion had heard while waiting for his cue, Theseus wanted to put the Lion at ease and to make some amends to Moonshine and the other actors.

Theseus whispered to the other nobles, “Our jokes have given the Lion stage fright. Let’s say some things to encourage these actors.”

“Well roared, Lion,” Demetrius said loudly.

“Well run, Thisby,” Theseus said.

“Well shone, Moon,” Hippolyta said. “Truly, the Moon shines with a good grace.”

Heartened by the praise, the Lion, recovering from stage fright, picked up Thisby's mantle in his mouth and shook it as if it were a mouse that a cat had caught.

"Well moused, Lion," Theseus said as the Lion exited.

The nobles applauded.

Lysander whispered, "And so the Lion vanished."

"And then came Pyramus," Demetrius whispered.

Bottom came onstage as Pyramus and recited, "Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy Sunny beams;

"I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;

"for, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,

"I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

"But stay! Oh, spite!

"But mark, poor knight,

"what dreadful dole is here!

"Eyes, do you see?

"How can it be?

"Oh, dainty duck! Oh, dear!

"Thy mantle good,

"What, stained with blud!"

Bottom thought, *Good, I remembered to say "blud." "Good" and "blood" are supposed to rhyme, but they can't rhyme unless their ends sound alike.*

Bottom continued, "Approach, ye Furies fell!

"Oh, Fates, come, come,

"Cut thread and thrum;

"Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!"

Theseus whispered, "Pyramus' passion — and the death of a dear friend — would go a long way in making a man feel sad."

Hippolyta joked, "Curse my heart, but I pity the man."

Pyramus recited, "Oh, why, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

"Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear —"

Backstage, Quince thought, *Devoured — not deflowered.*

Bottom continued, "— who is — no, no — who was the fairest dame

“who lived, who loved, who liked, who looked with cheer.

“Come, tears, confound;

“out, sword, and wound”

(Bottom made sure that “confound” and “wound” rhymed.)

“the pap of Pyramus —

“aye, that left pap,

“where heart doth hop.”

Pyramus stabbed himself, then said, “Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

“Now am I dead,

“now am I fled;

“my soul is in the sky.

“Tongue, lose thy light;

“Moon, take thy flight.”

*No, no, no, Quince thought. Bottom should have said, “Tongue, take thy flight / Moon, lose thy light.” “Tongue, take thy flight” means to be made silent by death.*

Moonshine exited.

Pyramus waited until Moonshine’s exit was complete, and then he continued, “Now die, die, die, die, die.”

He died.

Demetrius whispered, “If Pyramus were throwing a die, he would throw an ace or a snake eye — one dot on top — because now he is alone.”

“He would have to throw less than an ace,” Lysander whispered, “because he is dead — he is nothing.”

“With the help of a surgeon, he might yet recover, and show himself to be an ass again,” Theseus whispered.

Hippolyta whispered, “Now that Moonshine is gone, how will Thisby see her lover when she comes back?”

Thisby had come onstage and was skipping around, not seeing Pyramus.

“She will find him by starlight,” Theseus whispered back, and then he added, “Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.”

Hippolyta whispered, “I think that Thisby’s passionate speech and death should not last long — not for this Pyramus, anyway.”

She also thought, *I already know that Thisby's passion will end the play. To show off his knowledge, Theseus insists on telling me things I already know. How like a man!*

"It's difficult to tell whether Pyramus or Thisby is the better actor," Demetrius whispered. "Either way — Pyramus as an actor in male roles, or Thisby as an actor in female roles — God help us!"

"Look," Lysander whispered, "Thisby has used her sweet eyes to see Pyramus."

"And now we will hear Thisby start moaning," Lysander whispered.

Thisby recited, "Asleep, my love?

"What, dead, my dove?

"Oh, Pyramus, arise!

"Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

"Dead, dead? A tomb

"must cover thy sweet eyes.

"These my lips,

"this cherry nose,

"these yellow cowslip cheeks,

"are gone, are gone!

"Lovers, make moan.

"His eyes were green as leeks.

"Oh, Sisters Three,

"goddesses of fate, you be,

"come, come to me,

"with hands as pale as milk.

"Lay them in gore,

"since you have shore

"with shears his thread of silk.

"Tongue, not a word.

"Come, trusty sword.

"Come, blade, my breast imbrue."

Thisby stabbed herself.

She continued, "And, farewell, friends.

“Thus Thisby ends.

“*Adieu, adieu, adieu.*”

She died.

“Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead,” Theseus said.

“Yes, and Wall, too,” Demetrius added.

The nobles’ voices had gotten loud again.

Bottom heard the comments, came to life, and said, “No, I assure you; the Wall is down that separated their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?”

“No epilogue, please, for your play needs no excuse,” Theseus replied. “Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Indeed, if he who wrote it had played Pyramus and hanged himself using Thisby’s garter, it would have been a fine tragedy.”

Hearing that there would be no epilogue, Quince and the remaining actors came onstage to rejoin Bottom and Thisby.

Theseus’ jokes were funny, but cruel, and he stood for a moment and remembered that he had laughed hard during the play and that the play had done an excellent job of making the time pass quickly. Therefore, he added, “Your play is truly a fine tragedy, and all of you have *very notably discharged* it.”

Theseus looked at Philostrate, and the look and his words were enough to communicate that these Athenian craftsmen would be rewarded monetarily for their intellectual and aesthetic labors.

Theseus then said, “No epilogue, please, but yes, most definitely we want to see your Bergomask dance.”

The craftsmen danced, and then exited.

Afterwards, the craftsmen received the news of their monetary reward and made plans to meet together after work the following day to celebrate. At home, Quince thought about the audience reaction to his tragedy and reflected, *If the audience laughs at what is meant to be a deadly serious tragedy, wise actors — and a disappointed playwright — should say that they meant to make a comedy, not a tragedy. But wait! I did write a comedy — the word “comedy” even appears in the title: “The Most Lamentable Comedy, and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.” The word “tragedy” does not appear in the title at all. The audience’s laughter means that I am a successful writer of comedy, and all my friends are successful comedians. I can’t wait to tell them tomorrow night!*

During the Bergomask dance, Theseus reflected that the craftsmen had done too well their job of helping to pass the time. Before the craftsmen’s play, he had been eager for time to pass so that he could take Hippolyta to bed, but now — although he was still eager to take Hippolyta to bed — he discovered that everyone had stayed up past the time for the joys of bed to begin.

Theseus said, “The iron tongue of midnight has tolled twelve times on the clock. Lovers, all of us must go to bed — it is almost fairy time. I fear we shall sleep throughout the coming

morning as much as we this night have stayed up too late. This obviously bad — but very funny — play has well helped us pass the slow hours until bedtime. Sweet friends, let us go to bed. Throughout the next two weeks, we will celebrate with nightly revelry and with new joys.”

The humans exited.

Puck flew into the great chamber and said, “Now the hungry lion roars,

“and the wolf howls at the Moon,

“while the sleepy plowman snores,

“worn out by weary tasks too soon.

“Now the burned firebrands do glow,

“while the screech-owl, screeching loud,

“puts the wretch who lies in woe

“in remembrance of a shroud.

“Now it is the time of night

“when all the graves gape wide.

“Each one lets forth his sprite,

“in the churchway paths to glide.

“And we fairies, who do run

“by the Moon’s dragon-team

“from the presence of the Sun,

“following darkness like a dream,

“now are merry. Not a mouse

“shall disturb this blessed house.

“I am sent with broom before,

“to sweep the dust behind the door.”

As Puck spoke, he performed the job he traditionally did for good people: housework. (For lazy people, he made more work.)

Oberon and Titania flew into the great chamber with their attendant fairies.

Oberon said, “Through the house give gathering light,

“by the dead and drowsy fire.

“Every elf and fairy sprite

“hop as light as bird from brier;

“and this ditty, after me,

“sing, and dance it trippingly.”

Titania said, “First, rehearse your song by rote

“to each word a warbling note.

“Hand in hand, with fairy grace,

“will we sing, and bless this place.”

Oberon, Titania, and the other fairies sang and danced.

Oberon said, “Now, until the break of day,

“through this house each fairy stray.

“To the best bride-beds go we,

“which by us shall blessed be;

“and the babies there created

“ever shall be fortunate.

“So shall all the couples three

“ever true in loving be;

“and the blots of Nature’s hand

“shall not in their babies stand.

“No mole, hare lip, or scar,

“or mark monstrous, such as are

“despised in nativity,

“shall upon their children be.

“With this field-dew consecrated,

“every fairy take his gait;

“and each separate chamber bless,

“through this palace, with sweet peace,

“so that the owner of it blest

“ever shall in safety rest.

“Trip away; make no stay.

“Meet me all by break of day.”

Oberon, Titania, and the other fairies flew away, leaving only Puck. He knew that the bedsprings in various bedrooms were squeaking, and he wanted to have the last words in speaking:

“If we shadows have offended,  
“think but this, and all is mended,  
“that you have but slumbered here  
“while these visions did appear.  
“And this weak and idle theme  
“has yielded nothing but a dream.  
“Gentle people, do not reprehend.  
“If you pardon, we will mend.  
“And, as I am an honest Puck,  
“if we have unearned luck  
“now to escape the serpent’s tongue  
“that hisses thespians who lack pluck,  
“we will make amends ere long,  
“else the Puck a liar call.  
“So, good night unto you all.  
“Give me your hands, if we be friends.  
“Applaud us during our curtain call,  
“and Robin shall make amends.”

## ***AFTERWORD***

The major theme of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is love and the silly things it makes us do:

- Love can make us see a distinction where no real distinction exists. Lysander and Demetrius are very much alike, and Hermia and Helena are very much alike.
- Love can make us desire someone who is totally unsuitable for us. For a while, the fairy Queen, Titania, loves the ass-headed Bottom.
- Love can make us blind to the loved one’s faults.
- Love can make us jealous.
- Love (and jealousy) can make friends enemies.
- Love can make us quarrelsome.

- Love can make us fickle.
- We can fall in and out of love very quickly, and we can love, then not love, and then love again the same person.
- If we are rejected, love can make us have low self-esteem. Helena has very low self-esteem for much of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- Love can make us chase after someone who hates us.
- Love can make us attempt to use reason to explain love although love is a nonrational emotion. Lysander does this.
- Love is not irrational, although it can make people act in silly ways. Love is nonrational.
- If a tall woman steals your boyfriend, you may think that she was able to steal him because she is tall and you are short.
- One of the best comments on the nonrationality of love is made by Bottom: “And yet, to say the truth, reason / and love keep little company together nowadays.”

## ***CHAPTER IX: Much Ado About Nothing***

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

#### **Male Characters**

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon.

DON JOHN, his bastard Brother.

CLAUDIO, a young Lord of Florence.

BENEDICK, a young Lord of Padua.

LEONATO, Governor of Messina.

ANTONIO, his older Brother.

BALTHAZAR, Servant to Don Pedro.

BORACHIO, CONRADE, followers of Don John.

DOGBERRY, a Constable.

VERGES, a Headborough.

FRIAR FRANCIS.

A Sexton.

A Boy.

#### **Female Characters**

HERO, Daughter to Leonato.

BEATRICE, Niece to Leonato.

MARGARET, URSULA, Waiting-gentlewomen attending on Hero.

#### **Minor Characters**

Messengers, Watch, Attendants, etc.

#### ***Nota Bene***

The title *Much Ado About Nothing* contains wordplay. A thing is what a man has between his legs. A woman has no thing between her legs, so the title can be interpreted as *Much Ado About Pussy*. Given that this play is a romantic comedy, that title is correct.

In addition, in Elizabethan England “nothing” and “noting” were pronounced the same way. In the play, a lot of noting occurs — people note what other people say and do. Frequently, they misinterpret what they note, and this leads to complications in the play.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

Standing in the garden in front of the house of Leonato, the Governor of Messina, were Leonato himself, his daughter, whose name was Hero, and his niece, whose name was Beatrice. Also present was a messenger sent to Leonato by Don Pedro, the Prince of Aragon. The messenger had just given Leonato a letter about a battle fought between the forces of Don Pedro and his illegitimate half-brother, Don John. Don Pedro's soldiers had won the battle, and afterward, Don Pedro and Don John were reconciled.

"I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon is coming tonight to Messina," Leonato said.

The messenger replied, "By this time, he is very near. When I left him, he was not nine miles away from Messina."

"He has just fought a battle," Leonato said. "How many gentlemen — men of the upper classes — did he lose in the battle?"

"Few of any rank," the messenger replied, "and none of any great importance."

"A victory is won twice when the victor brings home alive nearly all of his soldiers," Leonato said. "I read in this letter that Don Pedro has bestowed much honor on a young Florentine named Claudio."

"Claudio much deserved the honor, and Don Pedro has properly rewarded him for his actions in the battle. Claudio performed deeds in battle that no one would expect such a young man to do. Despite having the figure of a lamb, he performed the feats of a lion. Claudio indeed exceeded all expectations of him so much that I cannot tell you all that he did."

"Claudio has an uncle here in Messina who will be very happy to hear of his heroism."

"I have already carried to Claudio's uncle letters that made him very happy," the messenger said. "The uncle felt so much joy that he broke out in emblems of what sometimes expresses bitterness."

"Did he break out into tears?" Leonato asked.

"In great measure. He cried much."

"That was a kind overflow of kindness as expressed by kindred. No faces are truer than those that are so washed by tears. How much better it is to weep at joy than to joy at weeping! It is much better to cry with happiness than to rejoice at someone's unhappiness."

Beatrice asked, "Please tell me whether Signior Mountanto has returned from the wars or not."

Beatrice thought, *The messenger will not understand my joke, but Hero will. I am referring to Benedick. A montanto is an upward thrust in fencing — it starts low and goes upward — and a stallion mounts a mare. Benedick is a ladies' man, and he and I have a history.*

The messenger replied, "I know none of that name, lady. No one of any rank in the army bears that name."

“Who is he whom you are asking about, niece?” Leonato asked.

“My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua,” Hero replied for Beatrice.

“Oh,” the messenger said. “He has returned, and he is as pleasant and amusing as he ever was.”

“Benedick once set up public notices here in Messina to announce that he was challenging Cupid to an archery contest,” Beatrice said. “He claimed to be a better lady killer than Cupid. Cupid is blindfolded, but his golden arrows have a great impact when they hit someone — that person instantly falls in love. By claiming to be superior to Cupid in archery, Benedick was claiming that he would never fall in love — and that he would make more women fall in love than Cupid could.

“My uncle’s fool, reading Benedick’s challenge, responded on behalf of Cupid, and competed against him in the archery contest. My uncle’s jester used bird-bolts in the contest — blunt arrows used to stun birds. Bird-bolts are given to children and to fools. My uncle’s fool mocked Benedick.”

She added, “Please tell me how many soldiers has Benedick killed and eaten in these wars? Better, just tell me how many he has killed. Benedick is a braggart who boasts about his prowess in many kinds of hunting, and so I promised to eat all of his killing. I do not think that he is enough of a soldier to kill anyone.”

“Truly, niece,” Leonato said, “you criticize Benedick too much, but he will find a way to get even with you, I am sure. Benedick can give as good as he gets.”

“Benedick has done good service, lady, in these wars,” the messenger said.

“You had stale food, and Benedick has helped to eat it. He is a very hearty eater; he has an excellent stomach.”

“He has an excellent stomach for battle,” the messenger said. “He is a good soldier, too, lady.”

“He is a good soldier compared to a lady, but what is he compared to a lord?” Beatrice asked.

“He is a lord compared to a lord, and a man compared to a man. He is stuffed with all the honorable virtues,” the messenger replied.

“You speak truly, indeed,” Beatrice said. “Benedick is no less than a stuffed man — he is a dummy — but what is he stuffed with? He is full of — shh, I ought not to finish that sentence. We are all mortal.”

“You must not, sir, mistake my niece,” Leonato said to the messenger. “Signior Benedick and she wage a kind of merry war. They never meet without engaging in a skirmish of wit between them.”

“Benedick performs poorly in those skirmishes,” Beatrice said. “People have five wits: memory, fantasy, judgment, imagination, and common sense. In our last skirmish, four of his five wits went limping off, and now the whole man is governed by one wit. If he has enough wit to keep himself warm in cold weather, let him know that it is what differentiates him from his horse. Human beings are the only rational creatures, and Benedick’s one wit is what allows him to be known as a reasonable creature.”

She added, "Who is his male friend and companion now? He has every month a new sworn brother for life."

"Is that possible? You must be exaggerating," the messenger said.

"No, it is very possible," Beatrice said. "He pledges his faith to each new friend just like he changes the fashion of the hat he wears. With each change in fashion, he wears a new hat."

"I see, lady, that the gentleman is not in your good books — he is not in your favor," the messenger said.

"No, he is not," Beatrice replied. "If he were, I would burn my library. But please tell me who is his new male friend? Is there no young hooligan now who will make a voyage with him to the devil?"

"He is most often in the company of the right noble Claudio."

"Benedick will hang upon Claudio like a disease. Benedick is more contagious than the plague, and the catcher of the Benedick illness becomes immediately insane. God help the noble Claudio! If he has caught the Benedick illness, it will cost him a thousand pounds before he can be cured."

The messenger thought, *This lady really is clever. The Benedictine priests are exorcists and attempt to cure madness. She made a good pun on "Benedick."*

"Lady, I will take pains to always be friends with you and so avoid becoming the victim of your tongue," the messenger said.

"Do so, good friend," Beatrice replied.

"You will never catch the Benedick disease and run insane, niece," Leonato said.

"No, not until there is a hot January in Italy," Beatrice replied.

The messenger heard a noise and looked around. He said, "Don Pedro is coming here now along with some other people."

Don Pedro and Don John, his illegitimate half-brother, with whom he had recently quarreled but then been reconciled, approached, along with Claudio, Benedick, and Balthasar, a singer and attendant who worked for Don Pedro.

Don Pedro said, "Good Signior Leonato, you are meeting your trouble. The fashion of the world is to avoid expense, but by hosting us you are encountering it."

"You are never a trouble to me," Leonato said. "Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace. Trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow stays and happiness leaves."

"You embrace the burden of my visit too eagerly," Don Pedro said. He nodded at Hero and said, "I think this is your daughter."

"Her mother has many times told me so," Leonato said.

"Were you in doubt, sir, that you needed to ask her?" Benedick joked.

Leonato joked back, "Signior Benedick, no. I knew that I was the father of my daughter because when she was born you were only a child. If you had been an adult, I might have had my doubts."

"Your joke has been answered, Benedick," Don Pedro said. "All of us know that you are a ladies' man. But truly the lady fathers herself. All we need to do is to look at Hero to know that Leonato is her father. Be happy, lady, because you resemble your honorable father."

Don Pedro and Leonato then went aside and spoke privately.

Benedick joked, "Even if Signior Leonato is her father, she would not want to have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is. Signior Leonato is bearded and has grey hair."

"I wonder that you are always talking, Signior Benedick," Beatrice said. "No one is paying attention to you."

"What, my dear Lady Disdain!" Benedick replied, "Are you still alive? I would have thought that you had died by now."

"It is impossible for Lady Disdain to die while she has such suitable food to feed it as Signior Benedick," Beatrice replied. "Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come within her presence."

"Then courtesy is a traitor," Benedick said. "But it is certain that I am loved by all ladies, with the exception of only you, and I wish that I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart because, truly, I love no one of the opposite sex."

"That is a precious piece of good fortune to women; otherwise, they would have been troubled with a pernicious and harmful suitor. I thank God and my cold blood that I am like you in loving no one of the opposite sex. In fact, I prefer to hear my dog bark at a crow than to hear a man swear that he loves me."

"May God keep your ladyship always like that!" Benedick said. "That way, some gentleman or other shall escape an otherwise predestined scratched face. Anyone who marries you can expect to be scratched."

"Scratching could not make the gentleman's face worse, if it were a face such as yours."

"You are an excellent parrot-teacher," Benedick said. "You would do well at teaching a parrot because you say the same kind of things over and over."

"My talking bird is better than your dumb beast," Beatrice replied. "A bird can say something, but a beast cannot."

"I wish that my horse had the speed of your tongue, and could gallop as long as you can talk," Benedick said. "But keep on talking — I have finished talking."

"I have known you a long time," Beatrice said. "You are like a jade — an ill-conditioned horse. You always end with a jade's trick — you fade and cannot go the distance."

Having finished their private conversation, Don Pedro said to Leonato, "That is all I have to say," and they rejoined the others.

Don Pedro said, "Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato has invited both of you to stay with him. I told him that we shall stay here at least a month, and he heartily hopes that some occasion may detain us here longer. I dare to swear that he is no hypocrite, but speaks from his heart."

"If you swear, my lord, you shall not commit perjury," Leonato said.

He then said to Don John, "Let me bid you welcome, my lord. Now that you have been reconciled with the Prince your brother, I owe you all my allegiance."

"I thank you," Don John said. "I am not a man of many words, but I thank you."

Leonato said to Don Pedro, "Will it please your grace to lead everyone into my house?"

"Let me have your hand, Leonato," Don Pedro said. "We will go inside together."

Everyone went inside except for Benedick and Claudio.

"Benedick, did you notice Hero, the daughter of Signior Leonato?"

"I saw her, but I did not take any special notice of her."

"Is she not a modest young lady of good conduct?"

"Are you asking me, as an honest man should, for my real and simple and true judgment?" Benedick asked. "Or are you asking for the answer that I, in my persona of a self-confessed enemy to and critic at every opportunity of the female sex, would give?"

"I am asking you for your real and simple and true judgment. Speak seriously and give me your true opinion."

"Why, I think that she is too low — too short — for a high praise. I think that she is too brown and suntanned for a fair praise of her beauty. I think that she is too little — too small — for a great praise. I can give her only this praise: If she looked different from the way she looks, she would be ugly. Still, because she is a she, I do not like her."

"You think that I am joking," Claudio said. "Please tell me truly whether you like her."

"You are asking a lot of questions about her. Are you thinking of buying her?"

"Can the world buy such a jewel?"

"Yes, and a case to put it into," Benedick said. He smiled, knowing that a case could mean a jewel-box or a suit of clothing. It also meant a sheath, such as a sword fits into. The Latin word *vagina* means sheath, and Benedick knew that if Claudio were to "buy" Hero by marrying her he would gain a sheath to put his "sword" into.

Benedick asked, "Are you asking me these questions seriously? Or are you being a flouting Jack — a scornful fellow — and trying to tell people that Cupid — who is blind — is good at finding hares and that the blacksmith god Vulcan is an excellent carpenter? Are you serious or satiric? I need to know what key you are in before I can sing in harmony with you."

"In my eyes, Hero is the sweetest lady whom I have ever seen," Claudio said.

“I can still see without spectacles, but I cannot see what you see,” Benedick replied. “I look at Hero and at Beatrice, who is possessed by an ancient Greek avenging spirit known as a Fury, and I see that Beatrice is more beautiful than Hero just like the first day of a spring May is more beautiful than the last day of a winter December. But I hope that you have no intention of becoming a husband. Are you thinking of marriage?”

“Even if I had sworn never to marry, I do not think that I would keep that promise if Hero were to agree to become my wife.”

“Has it come to this?” Benedick complained. “In all the world does not even one man exist who need not wear a cap out of suspicion that his wife has been unfaithful and made him sprout horns to provide evidence to the world that he is a cuckold? Shall I never see a 60-year-old bachelor again? But since you want to be married, go ahead and thrust your neck into a yoke and wear its imprint as you sigh on Sundays because you cannot get away from your wife and enjoy bachelor games.”

Benedick looked around and said, “Look, Don Pedro has returned to seek you.”

Don Pedro walked up to them and said, “What secret conversation have you been holding here that has kept you from joining us in Leonato’s house?”

“I wish that your grace would force me to tell you,” Benedick said.

“I order you — who have allegiance to me — to tell me.”

“You heard Don Pedro, Count Claudio,” Benedick said. “I can keep a secret as well as a man who cannot speak — I hope that you know that — but I have pledged my allegiance to Don Pedro and that outweighs other considerations. So, Don Pedro, listen well. Claudio is in love. With whom? I am sure that is the next question you would ask me. The answer is short: He is in love with Hero, Leonato’s short daughter.”

“What Benedick says is correct — assuming it is true,” Claudio said.

“This is like an old tale in which a statement is denied, and is denied again, and is finally revealed to be true,” Benedick said.

“Unless I change the object of my love very quickly,” Claudio said. “I hope that God will forbid me to love someone else.”

“Amen, if you love Hero,” Don Pedro said, “The lady is very well worthy and ought to be loved.”

“You are trying to trick me into admitting that I love her,” Claudio said.

“I am saying only what I truly believe,” Don Pedro said.

“I also said only what I truly believe,” Claudio said.

“By my dual loyalties to you, Don Pedro, and to you, Claudio, I also said only what I truly believe,” Benedick said.

Finally, Claudio admitted the truth: “I feel that I love Hero.”

Don Pedro replied, “I know that she is worthy of your love.”

Benedick said, "In my opinion, I neither feel how Hero should be loved nor know that she is worthy of being loved. That is an opinion that fire cannot melt out of me. If I were to be burned at the stake like a heretic, I would die still holding this opinion."

"You were always an obstinate heretic when it comes to beauty," Don Pedro said. "Courtly love is not a religion you follow."

"You believe what you believe through stubborn determination," Claudio said.

"That a woman conceived me, I thank her, and that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks," Benedick said. "However, I intend to avoid having a cuckold's horns on my forehead — I want to neither display them openly nor try to hide them. Therefore, women will have to pardon me for not wanting to be married. I will not do any women wrong by mistrusting them, but I will do myself right by not trusting any women. The fine for the life I chose is that I must live as a lifelong bachelor, but since I need not spend money to support a wife, I may spend more money on my clothing and so dress finer."

"I shall see you, before I die, look pale with love," Don Pedro said.

"I may look pale, but it will be with anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love," Benedick said. "If I ever cease to be a red-blooded man and instead become a pale lover, then use a ballad-writer's pen to put out my eyes and make me blind and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house in place of the sign showing blind Cupid."

"Well, if you ever stop your belief in bachelorhood and get married, you will prove to be a notable subject of gossip," Don Pedro said.

"If that ever happens, then hang me in a wicker basket like a cat and shoot arrows at me," Benedick said. "Let whoever hits me be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam after the famous archer Adam Bell."

"Remember this old saying: 'In time the savage bull will bear the yoke,'" Don Pedro said.

"The savage bull may bear the yoke of a farmer; but if ever the sensible Benedick bears the yoke of marriage, then pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead," Benedick said. "The horns will show everyone that I have an unfaithful wife. And let a sign be hung around my neck, and in such large letters as they write 'Here is a good horse for hire,' let the words on my sign say 'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'"

"If that should ever happen," Claudio said, "you would become as mad as a charging bull — you would be horn-mad."

"If Cupid has not already shot all the arrows in his quiver at the licentious ladies in Venice, he will shoot one at you soon and make you quake with love for a woman," Don Pedro said.

"I look for an earthquake too, then," Benedick said. "An earthquake is just as likely."

"Your resolve not to be married will weaken and become more temperate as time goes on," Don Pedro said. "In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, go to Leonato, give him my compliments, and tell him I will not fail to show up for supper; for indeed he has gone to great lengths to prepare a feast."

“I have almost wit enough in me for such a courteous mission,” Benedick said. He then started to use the conclusion of an old-fashioned, conventional, fancy, formal letter: “And so I commit you —”

“To the safe-keeping of God,” Claudio continued the conclusion. “From my house, if I had one —”

Don Pedro finished the conclusion: “The sixth of July. Your loving friend, Benedick.”

“Mock me not, mock me not,” Benedick said, a little peeved that they had taken his joke and had teased him about his lack of courtesy toward women. “Quit fooling around. Your conversation is like a garment that is decorated with odds and ends of cloth, and your decorations are but lightly sewn on. Before you mock the conclusions of old letters — and mock me — examine your conscience. You will see that I am right, and so I leave you.”

He exited.

Now that Claudio was alone with Don Pedro, he spoke seriously to him: “My liege, your highness now may do me good.”

“My friendship for you is such that I am eager to learn how I may do you good,” Don Pedro said. “Even if the lesson will take effort, I am eager to learn it as long as it will help you.”

“Does Leonato have a son, my lord?” Claudio asked. Even though he loved Hero, he was practical and wanted to know if Leonato had a male heir who would inherit Leonato’s property. If Leonato had no male heir, more property would come to Hero.

“He has no child but Hero; she’s his only heir,” Don Pedro said. “Do you love her, Claudio?”

“My lord, when we went onward to fight this war that has just ended in victory for you, I looked upon Hero with the eyes of a soldier. I liked her, but I had a rougher task at hand — I needed to fight rebels, not to turn *like* into *love*. But now I have returned from war, and now that war-thoughts have departed from my mind, I have room for love-thoughts of soft and delicate desires. These thoughts are all about how beautiful young Hero is and how I liked her before I went to war.”

“You will act like a lover soon and bore your hearers by reciting love poems to them,” Don Pedro said. “If you love fair Hero, enjoy your love-thoughts. I will speak first with her and then with her father, and I shall get her for you — you and she will be married. Isn’t this what you had in mind when you began to speak to me after Benedick left us?”

“You know what I wanted, and you could tell just by looking at me that I am in love,” Claudio said, “but I was worried that you might think that my love for Hero arose too suddenly. I was going to explain my love by telling you a long story.”

“The bridge does not need to be much wider than the river,” Don Pedro said. “You need say no more words than are necessary. In addition, the best gift is whatever is most needed. You want and need to marry Hero, and I will help make that happen. I know that we shall have some entertainment — a dance at which we will wear masks — tonight. I will disguise myself as you, and I will tell fair Hero that I am Claudio. I will tell her privately that I love her and want to marry her. She will agree — she will be taken prisoner because of the force and strong encounter of my amorous words. Then I will go to her father and get his permission for you to

marry her. In short, and finally, she will be your wife. Let us put this plan into action immediately.”

They exited in order to get dressed for the masked dance.

— 1.2 —

Leonato and Antonio, his older brother, talked together in a room in Leonato’s house.

“Hi, brother,” Leonato said. “Where is my nephew, your son? Did he make the arrangements for the musicians for tonight’s dance?”

“He is working on it,” Antonio said, “But, brother, I can tell you strange news that you do not dream of.”

“Is it good news?”

“Time will tell, but the news appears to be good — very good. Don Pedro and Count Claudio, while walking in a path through thickly branched trees in my garden, were overheard by a servant of mine. Don Pedro revealed to Claudio that he loves my niece — Hero, your daughter — and meant to tell her tonight at the dance, and if he found her willing to marry him, he meant to seize the quickest opportunity to talk with you and get your permission to marry her.”

Leonato was cautious; all too often conversations are misheard or misinterpreted. He asked, “Is the fellow who told you this intelligent and reliable?”

“He is a good sharp fellow,” Antonio said. “I will send for him, and you can question him yourself.”

“No, that will not be necessary,” Leonato said, “but let us regard this as a daydream instead of reality until the marriage proposal has actually been made. Still, we should let Hero know about this so that she will be better prepared to answer if in fact she is asked to consent to marry. Go and tell her.”

Antonio exited.

Antonio’s son entered with musicians, and Leonato spoke to them:

“All of you know what you have to do.

“Pardon me, friend; come with me and help me.

“Good nephew, please work hard and with enthusiasm during this busy time.”

— 1.3 —

In a room in Leonato’s house, Don John, who was Don Pedro’s illegitimate brother and who had been defeated in battle and then forgiven by him, was speaking with his loyal attendant Conrade.

“My lord, why are you so excessively sad?”

“The things that cause my sadness are excessive and therefore my sadness is excessive,” Don John said. “I am illegitimate — a fact that limited how much I could inherit. I have recently

been defeated. I have been forgiven — and not killed — by my victor, but he is keeping a close eye on me.”

“You should listen to reason.”

“And when I have heard it, what blessing will it bring to me?”

“If it will not bring you an immediate remedy for your sadness, then it can at least help you bear your suffering patiently.”

“You and I were both born under the astrological planet Saturn, and so both you and I are moody and melancholy and saturnine,” Don John said. “Therefore, I am surprised that you would attempt to cure my serious sadness with moralizing platitudes. I cannot hide what I am. I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man’s jests. I must eat when I am hungry and wait for no man’s permission. I must sleep when I am drowsy and be a servant to no man. I must laugh when I am merry and flatter no man. In short, I must do what I want to do when I want to do it without regard for anybody else.”

“True,” Conrade said, “but you must not do all these things just yet. You need to restrain yourself until you can do these things without taking into account your brother, who now has power over you and is watching you. You have recently rebelled against your brother, and he has just now taken you newly into his grace and favor. To stay in his good graces, you need to behave yourself. Now is not the time for you to be your true self.”

“I would prefer to be a noxious weed in a hedge than a cultivated rose in a flower garden,” Don John said. “It better suits my mood to be heartily hated by all than to assume a fake behavior that will gain me unearned affection from anyone. I speak truly. Although I cannot be said to be a flattering, honest man, it must not be denied that I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted — as long as I wear a muzzle — and I am allowed my freedom — as long as I am hobbled with a heavy weight. My brother has forgiven me enough not to kill me, but he has placed restrictions on me. I have decided not to sing in my cage. If I had the freedom to use my mouth, I would bite. If I had my liberty, I would do whatever I liked. In the meantime, I want you to let me be what I truly am and seek not to change me.”

“Can you make any use of your discontent?”

“I use it all the time because I am always discontented,” Don John said, and then he looked up and added, “Who is coming toward us?”

Borachio, another of Don John’s loyal attendants, came toward them.

Recognizing him, Don John said, “Do you have any news, Borachio?”

“I have come from a great supper yonder. Leonato is royally entertaining Don Pedro, your brother. I can give you news of an intended marriage.”

“Is there anyway that I can use this information to create trouble?” Don John asked. “Only a fool would get married and so make his life unquiet. Who is this fool?”

“He is your brother’s right hand.”

Speaking with hatred, Don John said, “Who? The most exquisite Claudio?”

“Yes.”

Again speaking with hatred, Don John said, "He is a handsome fellow! And to whom does he wish to be married? Which way does he look to find a wife?"

"His look has fallen on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato."

"She is a very precocious March-chick! This chick is very young. How did you come to learn this?"

"I was being employed as a perfumer," Borachio said. "To sweeten the air, I was burning sweet-smelling herbs in a musty room when Don Pedro and Claudio came in and talked seriously. I hid behind a wall hanging, and I heard that Don Pedro would woo Hero so that Hero and Claudio could wed."

"Let us go now," Don John said. "That may prove to be food for me and my discontent. That young upstart mightily helped defeat me in battle and so won much glory. If I can cross him in any way, I will bless myself in every way. Are you both loyal to me and will you both assist me?"

"To the death, my lord," Conrade said.

"Let us go to the great feast," Don John said. "Their happiness is all the greater because I have been defeated. I wish that the cook were of my mind and would poison all of them! Shall we go and find out what we need to do for me to get revenge on Claudio?"

"Lead the way, sir," Borachio said. "We will follow you."

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

In the ballroom of Leonato's house, Leonato, Antonio, Hero, and Beatrice talked. Other people were also present.

"Was Don John at the feast?" Leonato asked.

"I did not see him there," Antonio replied.

"How sour that gentleman looks!" Beatrice said. "Each time I see him I am heartburned for an hour afterward."

Hero said, "Don John is of a very melancholy and ill-tempered disposition."

"An excellent man would be he who was made halfway between Don John and Benedick," Beatrice said. "Don John is too much like a portrait and says nothing, and Benedick is too much like the eldest son of a lady; he is spoiled rotten and always chattering due to his expectation of a rich inheritance. The eldest son always inherits the bulk of the estate."

"In that case," Leonato said, "half of Signior Benedick's speech would be in Don John's mouth, and half of Don John's melancholy would appear in Signior Benedick's face —"

"With a good leg for appearance's sake and with a good foot for dancing, uncle, or with two of each," Beatrice said, "and with enough money in his wallet, such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good will."

She thought, *The French use "foutre" to refer to sex, and slang uses "money" to refer to semen. In addition, "will" is used in this culture to refer to "sexual passion." If a handsome man were capable of giving good foutre to a woman and had enough semen in his scrotum, such a man could win any woman in the world, if he could arouse her sexual passion.*

"Truly, niece," Leonato said, "you will never get yourself a husband because you are so shrewish with your tongue."

"Truly," Antonio said, "she is too curst — too ill-tempered."

"Too curst is more than merely curst," Beatrice said. "I shall lessen God's sending of gifts by being too curst. It is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns,' but to a cow too curst he sends no horns. God punishes a curst woman by sending her a husband with a short penis."

"Therefore," Leonato said, "because you are too curst, God will send you no horn."

"No horn means no husband because a husband is capable of being horny and producing a horn," Beatrice said. "I am blessed and thank God every morning and evening on my knees because I have no husband. I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face. I had rather lie in bed between woolen blankets. Both beards and woolen blankets are scratchy."

"Perhaps you can find a husband who has no beard," Leonato said. He thought, *Benedick has a beard, and Beatrice is unlikely to ever marry him.*

“What should I do with a husband who has no beard?” Beatrice replied. “Dress him in my woman’s clothing and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He who has a beard is more than a youth, and he who has no beard is less than a man. He who is more than a youth is not for me, and he who is less than a man, I am not for him. Therefore, I will take pay from an animal trainer and lead his apes to Hell, as is supposed to be the punishment for a woman who dies unwed and without bearing the children whom she ought to lead to Heaven.”

“Well, then,” Leonato said, “will you go into Hell?”

“No, not into Hell, but to the gate of Hell,” Beatrice said. “The devil will meet me there, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say, ‘Go to Heaven, Beatrice, go to Heaven. This is no place for you maidens.’ So I will hand over my apes to the devil and go away to Saint Peter to be admitted into Heaven. Saint Peter will show me where the unmarried people sit, and there we will live as merrily as the day is long.”

Antonio said to Hero, “Well, niece, I trust that you will listen to your father when it comes time to make the important decision about marriage.”

Beatrice replied, “Yes, indeed; it is my cousin’s duty to make a curtsy and say, ‘Father, I will do whatever you wish.’ But cousin, let your father choose for you a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy and say, ‘Father, I will do whatever I wish.’”

“Beatrice,” Leonato said, “I hope to see you one day married to a husband.”

“That will not happen until God makes men of some other material than earth,” Beatrice said. “Wouldn’t it grieve a woman to have to obey a piece of valiant dust? Or to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward, crumbly dirt? No, uncle, I want nothing to do with marriage. Adam and Eve’s descendants populate the world; Adam’s sons are my brethren, and I believe that it is a sin to commit incest.”

Leonato said to Hero, “Daughter, remember what I told you. If Don Pedro asks you to marry him, you know what to say.”

“The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you are not wooed in good time,” Beatrice said. “He must woo you properly — at the appropriate time and in the proper rhythm. If Don Pedro is too importunate, tell him that measure, proportion, and rhythm are desired in everything, and so dance out the answer. For — listen to me, Hero — wooing, wedding, and repenting are like a Scotch jig, a slow and stately dance measure, and a cinquepace. The wooing of a woman is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and quite fantastic. The wedding is like a slow and stately dance measure, full of state and tradition, and modest in manner and moderate in tempo. Then comes repentance, and the husband with his legs gone bad due to old age dances the cinquepace faster and faster as the time remaining to him passes faster and faster until he sinks apace — quickly — into his grave.”

“Beatrice, you are very perceptive — your understanding is very sharp,” Leonato said.

“I have a good eye, uncle,” Beatrice said. “I can see a church by daylight — I can see what is obvious.”

“The revelers are entering, Antonio,” Leonato said. “Let’s move aside and make room for them to dance.”

Leonato, Antonio, Hero, and Beatrice all put on their masks as the masked revelers — Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, the singer Balthasar, Borachio, Margaret (a gentlewoman who served Hero and who loved Borachio), Ursula (another gentlewoman who served Hero), and others arrived. Each mask was elegant and did a good job of hiding the wearer's face.

Don Pedro asked Hero, "Lady, will you dance with me — a man who loves you?"

"Yes," Hero replied. "As long as you dance gently — without stepping on my toes — and look handsome and say nothing, I am yours for as long as we dance around the room and especially when I walk away in the steps of this formal dance."

"When you walk away after the dance, will you ask me to accompany you?" Don Pedro asked.

"I may very well do so, if it pleases me to do so."

"And when would it please you to ask me to accompany you?"

"When I know that I like your face," Hero said. "A lute is a beautiful instrument, but it is often hidden by the ugly case it is kept in. I would hate for your face to be as ugly as the mask that covers it."

"My mask is like the humble thatched cottage roof that kept the rain off humble Philemon, whose character was made of gold," Don Pedro said. "When the god Jupiter traveled the earth in disguise to test the hospitality of the people he met, Philemon and his wife, Baucis, gave the disguised god the best hospitality that they were capable of giving."

"If what you say is true, then your mask should be thatched with hair," Hero replied.

"Speak quietly, and let us speak about love," Don Pedro said.

They danced.

In another part of the ballroom, Balthasar said to Margaret, "Well, I wish that you would like me."

"For your sake, I do not wish that," Margaret said. She loved Borachio, but she also loved to tease other men. "I have many bad qualities."

"Name one."

"I say my prayers out loud."

"I love you all the more because of it. Those who hear your prayers can cry, 'Amen!'"

"I hope that God matches me with a good dancer!"

"Amen!"

"And I hope that God keeps him out of my sight when the dance is done. Answer me the way the congregation answers a good preacher. Say 'Amen!'"

"No more words. I have finished," Balthasar said.

They danced.

In another part of the ballroom, Ursula, who had recognized the masked Antonio, said to him, "I know who you are; you are Signior Antonio."

Antonio denied it: "No, I am not Antonio."

"I know that you are Antonio by the way you move your head. Due to your old age, it trembles."

"No," Antonio said, like many people at masked dances who deny that they are who they are. "I am imitating Antonio."

"You could never imitate him so well, including his old age, unless you were Antonio," Ursula said. "Antonio is an old man, and you are exactly like an old man from top to bottom. Your hands are his hands. You are Antonio, and Antonio is you."

"I am not Antonio," Antonio said.

"Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent sense of humor? Can such an excellent quality hide itself? Stop denying it. Your good qualities have revealed that you are Antonio, and there is nothing more to be said about it."

In another part of the ballroom, Beatrice talked with Benedick, who had earlier recognized her by her voice.

Beatrice asked, "Won't you tell me who told you what you just said to me?"

Still disguising his voice, Benedick replied, "Please pardon me, but no."

"And you won't tell me who you are?"

"Not now," Benedick replied.

"Someone told you that I was disdainful, and that I stole my witty comments out of an old joke book titled *A Hundred Merry Tales*. Well, I know who told you that — it was Signior Benedick who said so."

"Who is Signior Benedick?" Signior Benedick asked Beatrice.

"I am sure you know him well enough."

"No, I don't — believe me."

"Hasn't he ever made you laugh?"

"Please, who is he?"

"He is Don Pedro's jester. He is a very dull and stupid fool. His only talent is inventing incredible slanders. No one but libertines who laugh at any joke delight in him, and they like him not because of his wit, but because of his villainies. He pleases some men by telling outrageous and villainous lies about other men, and then some men laugh at him and other men beat him. I am sure he is somewhere in this fleet of masked dancers. I wish that he had tried to board me with his wit — I know how to defend myself against his wit with my wit."

"When I become acquainted with the gentleman, I will tell him what you are saying," Benedick said.

“Do so,” Beatrice said. “He will make a joke about me and scornfully compare me to something nasty. If no one hears him or laughs, then he will sink into melancholy, and not eat, thereby saving his host a partridge wing.”

She listened to the music that started a new dance and said, “We must follow the leaders of the dance.”

“In every good thing,” Benedick said.

“If the leaders try to lead us to any bad thing, I will leave the dance floor at the first opportunity I get.”

Benedick and Beatrice danced.

A little later, in another part of the ballroom, Don John and Borachio talked. Claudio was nearby, but out of hearing distance.

Don John said, “I have been watching my half-brother, Don Pedro. I know that he is wooing Hero for Claudio but anyone who did not already know that would think that he was wooing her for himself. I think I can cause some trouble now. Don Pedro has left the dance floor to talk to Hero’s father and tell him that Claudio wishes to marry Hero. Actually, everyone except for we two and this one masked man has left the dance floor. The musicians are taking a break, and almost everyone is getting refreshments.”

“I know who the masked man over there is,” Borachio said. “He is Claudio. I can tell by his posture and the way he carries himself.”

Don John and Borachio walked over to Claudio.

Eager to cause trouble, Don John asked, “Aren’t you Signior Benedick?”

Often, people at masked dances lie to keep their identities hidden and have fun. Claudio did so now.

“You know who I am,” Claudio said. “I am Signior Benedick.”

“Signior Benedick, you are very close to my brother; he greatly respects you. Don Pedro is in love with Hero. Please, try to convince him not to marry her. Don Pedro is a Prince, and her birth is not equal to his birth. If you convince Don Pedro not to marry Hero, you will do a good deed.”

“How do you know that Don Pedro loves Hero?” Claudio asked.

“I heard him swear his affection to her,” Don John lied.

“I did, too,” Borachio said. “Don Pedro swore tonight that he would marry Hero.”

“Come, let us get some refreshments,” Don John said.

He and Borachio left, but Claudio remained behind and said to himself, “I pretended to be Benedick when I spoke, but *my* ears are the ears that have heard this bad news. I believe what I heard. I am certain that Don Pedro, who greatly outranks me and to whom I have sworn my allegiance, loves Hero and has wooed her for himself so that he can marry her. Friendship is enduring in everything except when it comes to love. Therefore, all hearts in love ought to use

their own tongues and do their own wooing. Let every eye negotiate for itself and trust no agent to negotiate a wedding. Beauty is a witch that charms the eye and turns friendship into rivalry. Such things as this happen every hour of every day, and I ought not to have trusted Don Pedro. Farewell, therefore, Hero! You shall be married to Don Pedro and not to me.”

Benedick, who had heard the gossip about Don Pedro, now entered the ballroom and, seeing the masked Claudio, asked him, “Are you Count Claudio?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Come, will you go with me?”

“Where?”

“We should seek a weeping willow — that symbol of unrequited love — because I have bad news for you. In what fashion will you wear your weeping-willow garland? Will you wear it about your neck, like a usurer’s gold chain? Or over your right shoulder and under your left arm, like a lieutenant’s scarf? You must wear it one way or another because Don Pedro has won your Hero. You may wish to continue to be his friend and grow rich from his bounty, or you may wish to challenge him to a duel.”

“I wish him joy of her,” Claudio said bitterly.

“You sound like an honorable seller of cattle — that is how they talk when selling a young castrated bull,” Benedick said. Even now, he was unable to stop making unappreciated jokes. “But seriously, did you think that Don Pedro would treat you like this?”

“Please, leave me and let me be alone,” Claudio said.

“Now you are acting like a blind man,” Benedick said. “You are striking out and hitting everything close to you. A boy stole your meat, but in your blindness you are hitting a post.”

“If you will not leave me, then I will leave you,” Claudio said.

He exited.

“Alas, poor hurt fowl!” Benedick said. “Now he will creep into a bush and use it as a hiding place.”

He paused and then added, “I am surprised that my Lady Beatrice should know me very well, and yet not know me when I was wearing a mask! She called me Don Pedro’s fool! Really! It may be that I am called that because I am merry. Perhaps, but I think that I am doing wrong to believe her when she said that. I am not so reputed; no one but Beatrice would call me Don Pedro’s fool. Beatrice has a base and bitter disposition that makes her believe that the entire world has the same opinion of me that she does. Well, I will be revenged on her as soon as I find an opportunity.”

Don Pedro now entered the room and asked Benedick, “Where is Claudio? Have you seen him?”

“Indeed, my lord, I have played the role of Lady Gossip. I found him here as melancholy as a lonely gamekeeper’s lonely lodge in a lonely warren. I told Claudio — and I think I told him the truth — that you had gotten the good will of this young lady and her agreement to marry, and so I offered to accompany Claudio on a visit to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland

of weeping willow because he is forsaken by love, or to make him a rod because he deserves to be whipped.”

“To be whipped! What is he guilty of?” Don Pedro said, puzzled. He had done what he had said he would do and had courted Hero for Claudio and had gotten her good will and her father’s permission for Claudio to marry her. Now he wanted to share the good news with Claudio.

“He is guilty of the undeniable transgression of a schoolboy, who, being overjoyed with finding a bird’s nest, shows it to his companion, who steals it,” Benedick said.

“The schoolboy is guilty of nothing. Having trust in someone is a virtue, not a vice. The companion who stole the bird’s nest is the guilty one.”

“Nevertheless, it would have been appropriate for a rod to be made from a weeping willow, and for the garland to be made as well. Claudio could wear the garland himself, and use the rod to beat you because — as I understand it — you have stolen his bird’s nest.”

Understanding dawned on Don Pedro. Gossip is often wrong, and great men are often the subjects of gossip. He said, “My intention is only to teach the nestlings how to sing and then I will return them to their owner. Soon enough, people will be talking about Hero’s marriage to Claudio.”

“If what the nestlings say agrees with what you are saying, then I will know that you are telling the truth.”

Don Pedro could have been insulted by this comment, but he knew and liked Benedick, who had recently fought bravely in battle for him, and one of the things that Don Pedro knew and liked about Benedick was his willingness to say plainly what he was thinking. Right now, Benedick was thinking that Don Pedro really wanted Hero for himself. No matter. Soon the truth would be known.

Right now, Don Pedro changed the subject: “The Lady Beatrice has a quarrel with you. The gentleman who danced with her told her that she is much wronged by you. The gentleman said that you insulted her.”

“I am the masked gentleman who danced with her,” Benedick replied. “She did not recognize me. I told her that someone said to me that she was disdainful and that she stole her witty comments out of an old joke book titled *A Hundred Merry Tales*.”

“Of course, Beatrice being Beatrice, she immediately concluded that the insulting gentleman was me. Beatrice so abused me in words that even a block of wood would not endure it. An oak with only one green leaf on it would have revived and responded to her abuse. My mask seemed to come to life and answer her. She told me, not knowing that I was Benedick, that I was your jester. She told me that I was duller than a great thaw during which the roads are so muddy that no one can leave home and so is forced to remain at home and be bored. She kept firing jest upon jest with such incredible skill at me — whom she did not think to be me — that I felt that I was standing next to an archery target with a whole army shooting at it.

“Beatrice’s words are daggers, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her insulting sentences, no one could live near her; she would infect the air from here to the North Star and the outer limits of the universe. I would not marry her even if she were endowed with

all that Adam had before he sinned and was thrown out of the Garden of Eden. She would have forced Hercules to dress in women's clothing and turn the spit on which meat roasted and do other work in the kitchen — yes, and she would have broken his club and made firewood out of it, too.

“But let us not talk about her — she is a well-dressed but infernal Ate — the goddess of delusion and folly. I wish to God that some scholar would exorcise whatever demon possesses her. It is certain that while she is alive here on Earth, a man may live as quietly in Hell as he could in a sanctuary, and it is certain that people sin on purpose because they prefer to go to Hell for the peace and quiet rather than stay on Earth with Beatrice. Indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow that woman.”

Don Pedro said to Benedick, “Look, here comes Beatrice now.”

Claudio, Beatrice, Hero, and Leonato walked over to Don Pedro and Benedick. Claudio was unhappy because he thought that Don Pedro and Hero were going to marry each other.

Benedick said to Don Pedro, “Will your grace command me to perform any service at the end of the world? I will go on any errand now to the opposite side of the Earth that you can think of to send me on. I will fetch you a toothpick from the furthest part of Asia. I will find the Christian emperor Prester John and measure the size of his feet and bring you the measurement. I will bring you a hair from the beard of Kubla Khan. I will embark on any embassy to the Pygmies. I will do any or all of these things rather than exchange three words with this Harpy named Beatrice. Do you have any such far-traveling task that you want me to perform?”

“No,” Don Pedro said. “All I want is your friendship and company.”

“Sir, here before me is a dish I do not love,” Benedick said. “I cannot endure Lady Tongue.”

Benedick exited.

“Beatrice,” Don Pedro said, “you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.”

“Indeed, my lord, he once lent me his heart for a while,” Beatrice said, “and I gave him interest for it. I gave him my heart, and so he received a double heart: my heart, which I gave him, and his own heart, which he lent to me and then took back. In fact, he won my heart and took it from me by using loaded dice, and so you may truthfully say I have lost it.”

“You have put him down, lady. You have put him down with words.”

“I hope that he will not put me down on my back, my lord, lest I should thereafter give birth to fools,” Beatrice said, and then added, “I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.”

Don Pedro looked at Claudio and noticed that he did not look happy. Don Pedro said to him, “How are you, Claudio? Why do you look sad?”

“I am not sad, my lord.”

“Are you sick?” Don Pedro asked.

“I am neither sad nor sick, my lord.”

Beatrice said, "Claudio is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well. Instead, he is as civil as an orange, and we all know that oranges from Seville, Spain, are bitter. If orange is the color of jealousy, then Claudio is jealous."

"Beatrice, I think your description of Claudio is correct, but if he is jealous, I swear that he has no reason to be jealous," Don Pedro said.

He then said to Claudio, "As I promised you, I wooed Hero in your name, and I have won her for you. I have spoken with her father and have obtained his good will. He approves of the match, so name the day that you will marry Hero, and may God give you joy!"

Leonato said, "Claudio, take my daughter and marry her, and with her take my fortune. Don Pedro has set up the match of you and my daughter, and may God bless this wedding."

Claudio was so surprised that he could not speak.

Beatrice said, "Speak, Count Claudio. It is your cue."

"Complete silence most perfectly announces complete joy," Claudio said. "I would be only a little happy, if I could say how much I am happy. Hero, as you are mine, I am yours: I give myself to you, and this exchange makes me ecstatic."

Beatrice said, "Speak, Hero, or, if you cannot, stop his talking with a kiss, and do not let him speak."

Claudio and Hero kissed.

Don Pedro said to Beatrice, "Lady, you have a merry heart."

"Yes, I do, my lord," Beatrice said. "I thank it, poor fool that it is, because it keeps me upwind of and safe from trouble. Look, Hero is whispering in Claudio's ear that he is in her heart."

"You are correct, and you are now my relative," Claudio said.

"Why, so I am," Beatrice said. "I am now your in-law. With marriage come new relatives and alliances. To the wedding altar goes everyone in the world but I — men must think that I am unattractive and sunburnt like a peasant woman who has to work outside all day. I may as well sit in a corner and sigh for a husband!"

"Lady Beatrice, I can get you a husband," Don Pedro said.

"I would like to have a husband who is of your father's begetting. Does your grace have any brothers like you? Your father must have sired excellent husbands, if a maiden could find them."

"Will you have me, lady?" Don Pedro asked.

Unsure whether this was a real proposal — her birth was not equal to Don Pedro's birth — and unsure how to act if in fact it were a real proposal, Beatrice took refuge in a joke: "No, my lord, unless I might have another husband for working days. You are too fancy to be my husband except on Sundays. But please pardon me: I was born to speak all mirth and no matter. From me, you get jokes, not serious conversation."

“Your silence most offends me, and your merriness best becomes you because, no doubt, you were born in a merry hour,” Don Pedro said.

“On the day that I was born, my mother cried during labor,” Beatrice replied, “but a star danced in the sky, and I was born with a horoscope that indicated merriness. May God give all of you joy!”

Leonato said, “Beatrice, will you do those errands I told you about earlier?”

“Yes, uncle,” Beatrice said, understanding that he was a little embarrassed by the joking between Don Pedro and her and so wanted her to leave. She said politely to Don Pedro, “Please excuse me,” and left.

Don Pedro said, “She is a pleasant-spirited lady.”

“There is little of melancholy in her, my lord,” Leonato said. “Beatrice is never sad except when she sleeps, and she is not always sad then, for I have heard my daughter say that Beatrice has often dreamed of unhappiness and then woken herself up with laughing.”

“She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband,” Don Pedro said.

“No, not at all,” Leonato said. “She laughs at all who try to woo her and so they woo someone else.”

“She would be an excellent wife for Benedick,” Don Pedro said.

Surprised, Leonato replied, “My lord, if they were married, they would make each other insane within a week.”

Don Pedro asked Claudio, “On what day do you want to go to church and be married?”

“Tomorrow, my lord. Time travels slowly — like an old man on crutches — until the love of Hero and me is properly recognized in a wedding ceremony.”

“That is too soon,” Leonato said. “Wait until Monday, my dear son, which is just a week away, and a time too brief, too, to properly plan a wedding.”

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “You are shaking your head with disappointment at having to wait so long, but I promise you that this upcoming week will not be boring. I will during this week undertake a new labor of Hercules. He did such things as bring the three-headed guard dog Cerberus out of Hell, but I plan to make Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice fall in love with each other. When I am finished, they will feel a mountain of love for each other. I want them to be married, and I believe that I can accomplish it, if you three will only give me such assistance as I shall ask you for.”

Leonato said, “My lord, I will do so even if it keeps me awake for ten nights in a row.”

“So will, I, my lord,” Claudio said.

“How about you, gentle Hero?” Don Pedro said.

“I will do anything that is respectable, my lord, to help Beatrice to get a good husband.”

“Benedick is not the worst candidate for a husband that I know,” Don Pedro said. “I can and do praise him. He is from a noble family, and he has proven that he is courageous in battle and has

established that he has a good character. Hero, I will teach you how to influence your cousin so that she will fall in love with Benedick. In addition, I, with the help of Leonato and Claudio, will so work on Benedick that, despite his quick wit and his queasy stomach for marriage, he will fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid will be out of a job because we will take his glory and his job and become the gods of love. I will tell you my plan.”

— 2.2 —

Meanwhile, Don John and Borachio talked and plotted together.

“The engagement has been made,” Don John said. “Count Claudio shall marry Hero, the daughter of Leonato.”

“The engagement has been made,” Borachio said, “but I can stop the wedding.”

“Anything that we can do to hurt Claudio will be like good medicine for me,” Don John said. “I hate him, and whatever will make him unhappy will make me happy. How can you stop this marriage?”

“I cannot stop it by using honest means,” Borachio said, “but I can stop it by using dishonest means. I can do this secretly so that no one will suspect me.”

“Tell me how, briefly.”

“I believe that I told you about a year ago that Margaret, one of Hero’s waiting gentlewomen, loves me.”

“Yes, I remember.”

“I can, at any indecent hour of the night, have her look out of Hero’s bedchamber window.”

“What life is in that, that would be the death of this marriage?”

“You yourself can mix the metaphorical poison that will kill the wedding,” Borachio said. “Go to Don Pedro, your brother, and tell him that he has wrongly and dishonorably behaved by arranging the marriage of the renowned Claudio — whom you will say that you greatly admire — to Hero, who you will say is a contaminated whore.”

“He will not believe that Hero is a whore without some evidence,” Don John said. “Can we manufacture any evidence that will seem to show that?”

“We can manufacture enough evidence to deceive Don Pedro, torment and vex Claudio, ruin the reputation of Hero, and metaphorically kill Leonato. What more can you want?”

“I will do anything to hurt those people.”

“Here is what we can do,” Borachio said. “Find a good time to talk in private to Don Pedro and Claudio. Tell them that you know that Hero loves me. Pretend to be very concerned about both men because you have learned this. Pretend to be worried about Don Pedro, who will lose honor because he arranged the wedding of Claudio to a ‘whore,’ and pretend to be worried about Claudio, who will lose his good reputation if he marries this woman who is, you will say, only pretending to be a virgin. They will not believe this without evidence. Take them outside Hero’s bedroom window at a time we will set, and they will see me outside the bedroom window. They will also see ‘Hero’ — that is, Margaret — and me together. I will call her

‘Hero,’ since she and I sometimes pretend to be aristocrats — she sometimes calls me ‘Claudio.’ All of this will happen the night before the wedding. That will give me time to arrange a reason for Hero to sleep somewhere else that night. We will give them enough ‘evidence’ of Hero’s disloyalty to Claudio that they will conclude that the ‘evidence’ is proof of Hero’s disloyalty and whoredom. In that way, the wedding will be stopped.”

“This plan will result in much evil, and I support it with all my heart,” Don John said. “Be clever in carrying out this plot, and I will reward you with a thousand coins.”

“As long as you play your part in the plot well, I will do likewise,” Borachio said. “This plot will succeed.”

“I will go immediately and find out on what day they intend to be married,” Don John said.

— 2.3 —

Benedick stood alone in Leonato’s garden. He called, “Boy!”

A young servant entered the garden and said, “Yes, sir?”

“On the sill of my bedroom window lies a book. Bring it here to me in this garden.”

“I am here already, sir,” the boy said, meaning that he would be back so quickly that it would be as if he had never left — a boast that he would not live up to.

“I know you are,” Benedick said, “but I wish that you had left already, so that you could the more quickly return.”

The young servant left to carry out the errand, and Benedick said to himself, “I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he falls in love, will, after he has laughed at such shallow follies in others, become what he has laughed at by himself falling in love. Such a man is Claudio. I have known when he would listen to no music but the drum and the fife of military music, but now he prefers the tabor and pipe music that is played at home. I have known when Claudio would have walked ten miles on foot to see a specimen of excellent armor. Now he will lie awake for ten nights planning which fashion a tailor should follow when making a new jacket for him. Claudio used to speak plainly and to the purpose, like an honest man. Now he has become a collector of pretty-sounding words. The words he uses are a fantastic banquet with many strange dishes. Is it possible that I will become so converted by falling in love and see things with eyes such as his? I cannot tell, but I think not. I will not swear to it, but love may possibly transform me into an oyster — the lowest form of animal life. But I will swear an oath that until love has made an oyster out of me, love will never make me such a fool as love has made Claudio.”

He paused and then said, “One woman is beautiful, yet I am well. Another woman is wise, yet I am well. Another woman is virtuous, yet I am well. Until all these graces can be found in one woman, I will not fall in love with one woman. The woman I fall in love with shall be rich — that is certain. She must be wise, or I want nothing to do with her. She must be virtuous, or I will not make a bid for her. She must be mild, or I will not let her come near me. She must be noble if I am to be an angel to her. She must be able to hold an intelligent conversation and to play music excellently, and her hair shall be of whatever color it pleased God to make it — it shall not be dyed or a wig.”

He heard a noise, looked up, and said, "Ha! Don Pedro and Monsieur Love! I am not in the mood to hear about a wedding. I will hide in the arbor."

Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato entered the garden.

"So shall we hear Balthasar sing this song?" Don Pedro asked.

"Yes, my good lord," Claudio replied. "How still the evening is, as if it were quiet on purpose to honor harmony!"

Don Pedro whispered, "Did you see where Benedick has hidden himself?"

"Yes," Claudio whispered. "Once the song is over, we will give that hidden fox value for his money."

Balthasar arrived with a small band of musicians.

"Balthasar, sing that song again," Don Pedro said.

"My good lord, please do not tax so bad a voice to slander music any more than once."

"It is evidence of excellency to pretend not to know one's own perfection. Please, sing, and don't make me woo you any more."

"Because you talk of wooing, I will sing," Balthasar said. "Many wooers woo a woman he thinks is not worthy, and yet he woos her and swears that he loves her."

"Please, sing," Don Pedro said. "If you want to continue to make sounds, do so with musical notes."

"Note this before I sing my notes: Not a note of mine is worth the noting."

Peeved, Don Pedro said, "Why, these are very crotchety words that he speaks: note, notes, noting, and nothing else — I hear nothing of the song I requested."

Not wanting Prince Don Pedro to be upset, the musicians began to play.

Benedick, who was hiding, said to himself, "Now, divine music! Now is Don Pedro's soul ravished! Isn't it strange that lute strings made from the guts of sheep should draw souls out of the bodies of men and take them to a kind of paradise? Well, I prefer to listen to a hunting horn, when all is said and done."

Balthasar sang this song:

*"Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,*

*"Men were deceivers ever,*

*"One foot in sea and one on shore,*

*"To one thing constant never:*

*"Then sigh not so, but let them go,*

*"And be you blithe and bonny,*

*"Converting all your sounds of woe*

*“Into ‘Hey nonny, nonny.’  
“Sing no more ditties, sing no more,  
“Of sad songs so dull and heavy;  
“The fraud of men was ever so,  
“Since summer first was leafy:  
“Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
“And be you blithe and bonny,  
“Converting all your sounds of woe  
“Into ‘Hey nonny, nonny.’”*

Don Pedro said, “Indeed, that is a good song.”

“And a bad singer, my lord,” Balthasar said.

“Ha, no, no — you sing well enough for a makeshift.”

Benedick disagreed with Don Pedro’s opinion of the song and its singer. He said to himself, “If a dog had howled like Balthasar, people would have hanged it. I hope to God that Balthasar’s bad voice is not a predictor of bad things to come. I would rather have heard the night-raven, predictor of ominous events, no matter whatever plague would follow its croaking.”

The song had reminded Benedick of his relationship with Beatrice. He had not been faithful to her.

“Listen, Balthasar,” Don Pedro said. “Please, get us some excellent music because tomorrow night we will have it played at the Lady Hero’s bedroom window.”

“I will get the best I can, my lord.”

“Do so. Farewell.”

Balthasar exited.

Don Pedro said, “Come here, Leonato. What was it you told me earlier — did you say that your niece Beatrice is in love with Signior Benedick?”

Claudio whispered, “Let us keep stalking our prey. Benedick is listening.”

Claudio said loudly, “I never thought that Beatrice would love any man.”

“Neither did I,” Leonato said. “It is especially to be wondered at that she should so love Signior Benedick, whom she has always seemed to hate in public.”

Benedick thought, *Is this possible? Is this the way the wind is blowing? Can Beatrice possibly love me?*

“Truly, my lord,” Leonato said. “I don’t know what to think about it, but I do know that she violently loves him. Her love for Benedick is past all understanding.”

“Do you think that she is faking her love?” Don Pedro said.

“That seems plausible,” Claudio said.

“Faking her love for Benedick?” Leonato said. “If so, never has anyone faked love as well as Beatrice.”

“What signs of love does she show?” Don Pedro asked.

Claudio whispered, “Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.”

“What signs, my lord?” Leonato said. “She cannot sleep and sits up at night — you heard my daughter tell you that.”

“She did say that, indeed,” Claudio said.

“How could she fall in love with Benedick?” Don Pedro said. “Your story of her falling in love amazes me. I would have thought that she would be invincible against all assaults of affection. I would have thought that she would never fall in love.”

“I thought the same thing, my lord,” Leonato said. “I especially thought that she would never fall in love with Benedick.”

Benedick thought, *I would think that this is a trick, but the white-bearded Leonato is saying that Beatrice loves me. He is a revered old man; surely such an old man would not play a knavish trick.*

Claudio whispered, “Benedick has been infected by our lie. Let’s keep up the trick.”

“Has Beatrice told Benedick that she loves him?” Don Pedro asked.

“No,” Leonato replied, “and she swears she never will. This torments her.”

“You speak truly,” Claudio said. “Hero told you that. Hero said that Beatrice said, ‘Can I, who have so often treated Benedick with scorn, write to him that I love him?’”

Leonato said, “According to Hero, Beatrice says those words whenever she tries to write to Benedick. She is up twenty times a night, and she sits in her slip until she has covered a piece of paper with writing, my daughter says.”

“Now that you have mentioned a sheet of paper, I remember something funny your daughter told us,” Claudio said.

Leonato said, “You mean when Hero saw a piece of paper that Beatrice had written on and saw that she had written ‘Benedick and Beatrice’ over and over on it until she had covered the paper.”

“Yes,” Claudio said.

“Oh, Beatrice tears her letters into a thousand pieces,” Leonato said, “and criticizes herself for being so immodest to write to someone who she knows would mock her. She says, ‘I predict what he would do by knowing what I would do. If he were to write to me that he loves me, I would mock him even though I love him.’”

“Then she falls down upon her knees,” Claudio said, “and weeps, sobs, beats her chest, tears her hair, prays, and curses. She says, ‘Oh, sweet Benedick! I love you! God give me patience!’”

“She does that, indeed,” Leonato said. “Hero said so. Beatrice is so overwrought with love that my daughter is sometimes afraid that Beatrice will do a desperate outrage to herself: This is the truth.”

“It would be good if Benedick were to learn of Beatrice’s love for him by some other means, if Beatrice will not herself tell him,” Don Pedro said.

“Why?” Claudio said. “Benedick would only make a sport of it and torment the poor lady.”

“If he would treat her that way, the world would be a better place if we hanged him,” Don Pedro said. “Beatrice is an excellent and sweet lady, and everyone knows that she is virtuous.”

Claudio said, “She is also intelligent.”

“In everything except for loving Benedick,” Don Pedro said.

“My lord, when intelligence and love combat in one body for supremacy, ten times out of eleven love will win. I am sorry for Beatrice. I am her uncle and her guardian, and I care for her.”

“I wish that Beatrice loved me so passionately,” Don Pedro said. “Despite the difference in our births and social ranks, I would make her my wife. Let us tell Benedick that Beatrice loves him, and let us hear what he will say.”

“Is that a good idea?” Leonato asked.

“Hero thinks that Beatrice will die,” Claudio said. “Beatrice said that she will die if Benedick does not love her. And she said that she would rather die than tell him that she loves him. And she said that she would rather die than stop her accustomed crossness toward him even if he woos her.”

“Beatrice may well be right,” Don Pedro said. “If she tells Benedick that she loves him, it is very probable that he will scorn and mock her love. As we all know, Benedick can be contemptuous.”

“He is a very handsome man,” Claudio said.

“He has indeed a fortunate appearance,” Don Pedro said.

“Yes,” Claudio said, “and I think that he is very intelligent.”

“He does indeed show some sparks that are both witty and sensible,” Don Pedro said.

“I know that he is courageous,” Claudio said.

“He is as brave as Hector, leader of the Trojan army,” Don Pedro said. “He shows wisdom in the managing of quarrels. He either avoids them with great discretion, or he undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear that makes him want to do the right thing.”

“If he fears God,” Leonato said, “he must necessarily keep the peace: If he breaks the peace and enters into a quarrel, he ought to do so only with Christian fear and trembling and a desire

to act ethically.”

“So he does,” Don Pedro said. “In reality, Benedick fears his God. Fearing God is a good thing because it keeps us from doing sin. However, when Benedick makes some of his most notable and critical jests, he does not seem to fear God. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him that Beatrice loves him?”

“Let us never tell him, my lord,” Claudio said. “Let her get over her love with the help of good counsel.”

“No, that is impossible,” Leonato said. “Her heart will break first.”

“We will hear more from Hero,” Don Pedro said. “For now, let us not tell Benedick. I respect Benedick, and I wish that he would look at and evaluate himself — he would see how much he is unworthy to have the love of so good a lady.”

“My lord, shall we go?” Leonato asked. “Dinner is ready.”

Claudio whispered, “If Benedick does not fall in love with Beatrice after hearing this, I will never again trust my innermost beliefs.”

Don Pedro whispered, “Let’s trick Beatrice the same way we tricked Benedick. We will spread the same net for her and trap her. Hero and her gentlewomen attendants will have to do that. We will have good entertainment when Benedick and Beatrice each think that the other is in love, when that is not true — yet. I really want to see them meet. It will be a dumb show — a pantomime — because both will be too embarrassed to speak to each other. Also, their conversation together has consisted entirely of insulting one another, and they will no longer do that and so they will not speak to each other. Let us send Beatrice to call Benedick to dinner.”

Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato exited, leaving the hidden Benedick alone.

Benedick came out from his hiding place and said to himself:

“This is no trick. They were talking seriously, and they learned from Hero that Beatrice loves me. They seem to pity the lady: It seems that her love for me is like a bow that has been fully bent — it is stretched to the limit. Beatrice loves me! I must return her love. I hear how I am censured and criticized. They say that I will be haughty if I learn that Beatrice loves me; they also say that she would rather die than show me any sign of affection. I never thought that I would marry. I must not seem haughty — happy are those people who hear about their faults and work to mend them. They say that Beatrice is beautiful; that is true — I can see that for myself. They say that Beatrice is virtuous; that is also true — I know of no evidence against it. They say that Beatrice is intelligent except for loving me. Her loving me may not be good evidence of her intelligence, but I swear that it will not be good evidence of any stupidity — I intend to be horribly in love with her.

“I may perhaps have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me; people will tease me because I have railed for so long against marriage, but don’t tastes change? A man may love certain foods in his youth that he cannot endure in his old age. Shall quips and sentences and written criticisms — paper bullets that come from the brain — keep a man from following his heart? No, the world must be populated with people. When I said that I would die a bachelor, I did not think that I would live to see the day during which I would marry.

“Look, here comes Beatrice! By God, she is a beautiful woman! I see some signs of lovesickness in her.”

“Against my will, I have been sent to tell you to come in to dinner,” Beatrice said.

“Beautiful Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.”

“I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me. If telling you to come in and eat had been too painful to me, I would not have come.”

“You take pleasure then in delivering the message?”

“Yes, just as much pleasure as you can hold on the point of a knife — it is not even enough to choke a chattering crow.”

Beatrice paused, expecting a witty though insulting reply. Not getting one, she said, “You have no stomach, either for food or invective, Signior Benedick? Then fare you well.”

She exited.

“Ha!” Benedick said to himself. “She said, ‘Against my will, I have been sent to tell you to come in to dinner.’ What she said has a double meaning. ‘I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me.’ That means the same thing as ‘Any pains that I take for you are as easy as thanks.’ If I do not take pity on her and love her in return, then I am a villain. If I do not love her, then I am not a Christian. I will commission a miniature portrait of Beatrice to be made and set in a locket.”

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

After dinner, Hero and her two gentlewomen attendants, Margaret and Ursula, were walking in Leonato's garden.

Hero said, "Good Margaret, go to the parlor. There you will find my cousin Beatrice talking with Don Pedro and Claudio. Whisper in her ear and tell her that Ursula and I are walking in the garden and you overheard us gossiping about her. Beatrice will be curious about what we are saying about her. Tell her that she can eavesdrop on us if she sneaks into the latticework bower that is shaded by the intertwining, sun-ripened honeysuckle overhead. The honeysuckle grew because of the sun, but now like an ungrateful courtier it plots against its benefactor and keeps the sunshine from reaching the ground. Tell her that if she hides herself there, she can hear all that we say about her. That is what I want you to do. Do it well, and then leave the rest to us."

"I will make Beatrice come here and hide, I promise you, immediately," Margaret said before exiting.

Hero said, "Now, Ursula, when Beatrice does come, as we walk up and down here in this arbor, we will talk only about Benedick. Each time I mention him, praise him more than any man has merited. I will say to you that Benedick is madly in love with Beatrice. In this way, we can make one of Cupid's crafty arrows: It will be the kind that wounds — that is, makes someone fall in love — as a result of gossip that people hear."

Beatrice appeared and tried — unsuccessfully — to keep herself out of sight.

"Let's begin," Hero whispered. "I can see Beatrice now. She is like a bird that runs along the ground as she tries to get close enough to us to listen to what we say."

Ursula whispered, "The best part of fishing is seeing the fish with its golden oars — the fins — cut through the silver stream and greedily devour the treacherous bait. Now we are fishing for Beatrice, who I can now see has hidden herself in this arbor. Don't worry about me; I will do my part in our conversation."

Hero whispered, "Let's go near her. We want to be sure that Beatrice can hear the false sweet bait that we are casting toward her."

Hero said loudly, "No, truly, Ursula, Beatrice is too disdainful and scornful. I know that her personality is as defiant and wild as the hawks on the rocky cliffs."

"Are you sure that Benedick loves Beatrice so strongly?"

"So say Don Pedro and Claudio."

"Did they tell you to tell Beatrice that Benedick loves her?"

"They wanted me to tell her," Hero replied, "but I told them that if they wanted what was best for Benedick to advise him to wrestle with his love for Beatrice, and to never let her know about it."

“Why did you do that?” Ursula asked. “Doesn’t Benedick deserve as good a bed as Beatrice lies on? Doesn’t he deserve as good a wife as Beatrice would be?”

“By the god of love, I know that Benedick deserves as much as may be given to a man, but Nature has never made a woman’s heart of prouder stuff than the heart of Beatrice. Disdain and scorn sparkle in her eyes, which undervalue what they look at, and she values her cutting wit much more than she values anything else — in comparison to her wit, everything else seems weak and unworthy to her. She is not capable of feeling love or affection for anyone else; she loves only herself.”

“I think that you are right,” Ursula said. “It is best that Beatrice does not know that Benedick loves her — if she did, she would make fun of him.”

“That is true,” Hero said. “I have never yet seen a man — no matter how wise, how noble, how young, how handsomely featured — whom she would not totally misconstrue and say that his virtues are faults. She would spell the man’s name backwards the way that witches recite the Lord’s Prayer backwards. If he had a light complexion, she would swear that the gentleman should be her sister. If he had a dark skin, she would swear that Nature, while attempting to draw him, let some ink drip and made a foul and ugly blot. If he were tall, she would swear that a lance had an ugly head. If he were short, she would swear that a miniature portrait made from an agate had been very badly cut. If he were talkative, she would swear that he is a weathervane blown by all winds. If he were quiet, she would swear that he is a block of wood or stone that is moved by no wind. Thus she turns every man the wrong side out, and she never acknowledges the truth and virtue that a man of integrity and merit has deserved.”

“Such carping is not commendable,” Ursula said.

“Indeed not,” Hero said. “To be as odd and eccentric as Beatrice is cannot be commendable. But who dares to tell her that? If I were to speak to her and tell her that, she would mock me until I disintegrated into air and were reduced to nothing. Or she would laugh at me until my soul departed from my body. Or she would load me with her heavy wit until the weight crushed me. Therefore, let Benedick, like glowing coals that have been covered with ashes to preserve the fire during the night, consume himself with sighs and waste away inwardly. That would be a better death than to be mocked to death, which is as bad as to die by being tickled to death.”

“Nevertheless, tell Beatrice that Benedick loves her, and hear what she will say,” Ursula said.

“No,” Hero replied. “Instead, I will go to Benedick and advise him to fight against his passion for Beatrice. Indeed, I will devise some honest slanders — some harmless lies — to stain Beatrice with. Perhaps some ill words will make Benedick stop loving Beatrice, although everyone knows that she is virtuous.”

“Do not do Beatrice such a wrong as to make up lies about her, even if they seem to be harmless,” Ursula said. “She cannot so entirely lack true judgment — not if she has so swift and excellent a wit as she is reputed to have — that she would refuse to marry so exceptional a gentleman as Signior Benedick.”

“He is the best man in Italy with the exception of my own dear Claudio,” Hero said.

“Please, do not be angry with me, madam, but I have to say that Signior Benedick is the best man in Italy when it comes to judging his attractiveness, bearing, intelligence, and courage.”

“Indeed, he has an excellent reputation,” Hero replied.

“His excellence earned his excellent reputation,” Ursula said, and then she asked, “When will you be married, madam?”

“Tomorrow, and every day afterward,” Hero replied. “Come, let us go inside. I will show you some of my clothing, and you can advise me what to wear at my wedding.”

Ursula whispered, “We have trapped Beatrice the way that hunters trap birds. We have caught her, madam.”

Hero whispered back, “If that is true, then love can happen by chance, as well as by other ways. Cupid makes some people lovers through the use of an arrow, and others through the use of a trap.”

Hero and Ursula exited.

Beatrice came out from her hiding place and said to herself, “My ears are burning. Can this be true? Do people really criticize me so much for being proud and scornful? In that case, I say farewell to contempt and adieu to maidenly pride. People do not say good things behind the back of a person who is proud and scornful. But, Benedick, continue to love me because I will return your love. I will tame my wild heart and return your love. If you really do love me, my kindness shall convince you to bind our loves in the holy bond of marriage. Other people say that you deserve my love, and I believe it on better evidence than the gossip I have overheard.”

— 3.2 —

In a room in Leonato’s house, Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and Leonato were talking. Benedick had shaved off his beard. (Earlier, Beatrice had said, “I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face.”)

Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato expected Benedick to be in love with Beatrice as a result of their trick, and they were looking forward to teasing him.

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “I will stay only until your marriage is official, and then I will go to Aragon.”

“I will accompany you there, my lord, if you will allow me to,” Claudio said.

“No, not so soon after your marriage,” Don Pedro said. “You have pleasures to enjoy, and taking you away from your marriage so soon would be like showing a child his new coat and forbidding him to wear it. I will be bold enough to have Benedick accompany me because I enjoy his company. From the top of his head to the bottom of his foot, he is all mirth and laughter. Two or three times Cupid attempted to shoot him with an arrow and make him fall in love, but Benedick cut the string of Cupid’s bow and so Cupid no longer dares to shoot at him. Benedick has a heart as sound as a bell and his tongue is the clapper — whatever his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.”

“Gallants, I am not as I have been,” Benedick said. “I have changed.”

Leonato said, “I think that is true. You seem to be more serious now.”

“I hope that Benedick is in love,” Claudio said.

“That is not possible,” Don Pedro said. “Not one drop of his blood is capable of being truly touched with love. If Benedick is more serious now, he must be broke and need money.”

“I suffer from toothache,” Benedick said, but he thought, *It is more accurate to say that I suffer from lovesickness. I am saying that I have a toothache to explain why I am different from the way I usually am.*

“Draw it out,” Don Pedro advised. “Pull it out.”

Hearing the word “draw,” Benedick punned on “hanged, drawn, and quartered” by exclaiming, “Hang it!”

“You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards,” Claudio joked. He thought, *Drawing is disemboweling, and quartering is being cut into four pieces — being hanged, drawn, and quartered is the punishment given to traitors. Benedick has been a traitor to love by refusing to fall in love.*

“Are you sad because of your toothache?” Don Pedro asked Benedick.

“The pain is caused by a little tooth decay,” Leonato said.

“No one feels the pain except the person who has it,” Benedick said. “People think that it is easy to solve someone else’s problems.”

Claudio said, “I think that Benedick is in love.”

“I do not see any sign of love in Benedick,” Don Pedro said, “except for his love of foreign fashions. He dresses like a Dutchman today, a Frenchman tomorrow, or in the dress of two countries at once. He can dress like a German from the waist downward and wear baggy pants while he dresses like a Spaniard from the hip upward and does not wear a jacket. Unless he has a love for this kind of fashion foolery, as he appears to have, he is no fool for love, as you say he is.”

“If Benedick is not in love with some woman, then we ought to no longer trust the signs that traditionally show that a man is in love,” Claudio said. “Benedick brushes his hat and cleans it each morning. What do you suppose that means?”

Don Pedro decided to tease Benedick, who he knew had recently shaved off his beard. He said, “Another sign of a man’s being in love is that he pays special attention to his appearance. Has anyone seen Benedick visit a barber?”

“No, but the barber’s assistant has visited Benedick,” Claudio said. “You can see that his beard has disappeared — the old ornament of his cheeks has been used to stuff old-fashioned, homemade tennis balls.”

Leonato said, “Indeed, Benedick looks younger than he did. The loss of his beard has been a fountain of youth for him.”

“Not only that,” Don Pedro said, “but Benedick has been rubbing his body with cologne. Is it possible to tell anything about him by smelling him?”

“Yes, indeed,” Claudio said. “We can smell that sweet Benedick is in love.”

“The best evidence that Benedick is in love is his seriousness,” Don Pedro said. “Benedick used to always be a mirthful man.”

“And when has Benedick been known to take such care in washing his face?” Claudio said. “Now he uses a cosmetic lotion.”

“Yes, indeed,” Don Pedro said. “When has Benedick been known to use any kind of cosmetics? I know what people say about him because he does that.”

“Benedick’s jesting spirit has turned into a string for a lute, a musical instrument used for playing love songs,” Claudio said. “Strings are tuned with frets, and now Benedick frets. That is why he listens to melancholy music that is heavy on the soul.”

“All of the evidence points to one conclusion,” Don Pedro said. “Benedick is seriously in love.”

“I know who loves him,” Claudio said.

“I would like to know who she is,” Don Pedro said. “I’m guessing she does not know him well.”

“Yes, she does,” Claudio said. “She knows his faults, and yet she is dying of love for him. She would love to die in his arms.”

“If she dies in that position, she will be dying while lying flat on her back with her knees apart,” Don Pedro said.

In this culture, “to die” was slang for “to have an orgasm.”

“All of this talk is not curing my toothache,” Benedick said. “Leonato, will you take a walk with me? I need to tell you eight or nine wise and serious words that these buffoons must not hear.”

Benedick and Leonato exited.

“I swear on my life that Benedick is going to talk to Leonato about Beatrice,” Don Pedro said.

“I think you are right,” Claudio said. “Hero and Margaret have by this time played their trick on Beatrice, who has probably fallen in love with Benedick. When Benedick and Beatrice — two bears — meet, they will not bite one another as used to be their custom.”

Don John walked up to the two men and said to Don Pedro, “My lord and brother, God save you!”

“Good day, brother,” Don Pedro said.

“If you have time, I would like to speak with you.”

“In private?”

“If it pleases you,” Don John said, “yet Count Claudio may hear because what I want to speak about concerns him.”

“What’s the matter?” Don Pedro asked.

Don John said to Claudio, “Do you intend to get married tomorrow?”

Don Pedro said, "You know he does."

"He may change his mind after he hears what I have to say and knows what I know."

"If there is any reason why I should not be married, please tell me what it is," Claudio said.

"You may think that I don't like you," Don John said. "Judge whether I do after you have heard what I have to say — I think that your opinion of me will be better than it is now. I believe that my brother greatly respects you, and because of his respect for you he has helped you to become engaged to Hero — but his effort to help you has failed and he has wasted his time and labor."

"Why, what's the matter?" Don Pedro asked.

"I came here to tell you what is the matter," Don John said. "Briefly, and without unnecessary details, since the lady is not worthy of being long spoken about, Hero has been unfaithful to you."

"Hero?" Claudio said.

"Yes," Don John said. "Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero."

"Unfaithful?" Claudio said.

"The word is too good to point out all the extent of her wickedness," Don John said. "I could say she has been worse than unfaithful. If you can think of a worse word, I can show you that the worse word also ought to be used to describe her. Restrain your disbelief and let me provide proof. Go with me tonight, and you shall see a man enter her bedroom window the night before her wedding day. If you still love her after seeing that, marry her tomorrow, but if you want to keep your honor, it would be better for you to remain single."

"Can this be true?" Claudio asked.

"No," Don Pedro said. "I don't believe it."

"If you dare not trust what you see with your own eyes, then do not say that you know anything. Go with me tonight, and I will show you both something that you can see with your own eyes. You will see enough to change your minds. When you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly."

"If I see tonight any reason why I should not marry Hero tomorrow in the church," Claudio said, "I will disgrace her in front of the congregation."

"And since I helped you become engaged to her," Don Pedro said, "I will join with you in disgracing her."

"I will disparage Hero no farther until you are witnesses that she is unfaithful," Don John said. "Bear this bad news calmly until midnight, and then believe what you see with your own eyes."

"The happiness of this time has been perversely altered," Don Pedro said.

"The happiness of this time has been unexpectedly ruined by evil," Claudio said.

“It is better to say that a plague of evil has been happily prevented,” Don John said. “You will feel that way after you see what I have to show you tonight.”

— 3.3 —

On a public street, Dogberry, who was the city’s head constable, and Verges, an old man who was Dogberry’s assistant, were talking to some newly recruited night watchmen whose job it was to maintain the peace of the city. Dogberry and Verges were paid to do their jobs, while the new recruits were unpaid: Acting occasionally as night watchmen was part of their duty as citizens. Also present was this book’s author, who thought, *I am a magician, and I have turned myself invisible. I will take no part in the events of this book, except for one thing. Dogberry, Verges, and the other watchmen often make malapropisms — they humorously misuse words and often say the opposite of what they mean to say. I will use the magic of my right hand and of my left index finger (which mainly presses as needed the shift key) to sometimes make appear [in brackets] the right words after the wrong words that Dogberry, Verges, and the other watchmen use.*

Dogberry asked the newly recruited watchmen, “Are you good men and true?”

“Yes, they are good men and true,” Verges replied for them. “If they were bad men and false, then it would be a pity unless they did suffer salvation [damnation] of both their body and soul.”

“That would be a punishment too good for them,” Dogberry said, “if they should have any allegiance [alleged defiance or disloyalty] in them, since they have been chosen to be night watchmen of the Prince’s city.”

“Well, give them their orders, neighbor Dogberry,” Verges said. “Tell them their duties.”

“First, who do you think is the man most desertless [deserving] to be a constable?” Dogberry asked.

“Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacole, because they can write and read,” the first watchman said.

“Come here, neighbor Seacole. God has blessed you with a good reputation: To be a handsome man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature [nurture].”

The second watchman said, “Both which, master constable —”

“— you have,” Dogberry finished, adding, “I know what you were going to say; I knew this would be your answer. Well, give God thanks for your good looks and don’t boast about them. As for your writing and reading, use those when you have no need [have need] to use such vain [worthy and useful] accomplishments. You are thought here to be the most senseless [sensible (he meant to say “sensible,” but “senseless” is accurate)] and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore, you shall carry the lantern. This is your duty: You shall comprehend [apprehend] all vagrom [vagrant] men; you are to order any such man to halt, in the Prince’s name.”

“What do we do if a man will not halt?” the second watchman asked.

“Why, then, take no note of him,” Dogberry said. “Ignore him and let him go, and immediately call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.”

“If he will not halt when he is ordered to halt, he is not one of the Prince’s subjects,” Verges said.

“True, and we watchmen are to meddle with no one except the Prince’s subjects,” Dogberry said. “You shall also make no noise in the streets; for the watchmen to babble and to talk while on duty is most tolerable [intolerable] and not to be endured.”

“We will sleep instead of talk,” a watchman said. “We know what watchmen do.”

“Why, you speak like an experienced and very quiet watchman,” Dogberry said. “I cannot see how sleeping would offend anyone; however, take care that your weapons are not stolen. As watchmen, your weapons will be bills, aka pikes. Well, another duty is that you are to call at all the ale-houses, and tell those who are drunk to go home and sleep.”

“What do we do if they will not follow orders?”

“Why, then, let them alone until they are sober,” Dogberry said. “If when they are sober they still do not follow orders, then you may say that they are not the drunk men you took them for.”

“OK, sir,” the watchman said.

“If you meet a thief, you may suspect by virtue of your office that he is no true man. The less you meddle with or interact with such men, the better it is for you because you will avoid becoming corrupted by contact with such evil men.”

“If we know that a man is a thief, shall we not lay hands on him and arrest him?” a watchman asked.

“Truly, by your office, you may,” Dogberry said, “but I think people who touch tar will be defiled; therefore, the most peaceable [peaceful] way for you to behave, if you do see a thief, is to let him show what he is and steal out of your presence.”

“You have been always called a merciful man, partner,” Verges said.

“Truly, I would not willingly hang a dog, much more [less] an even partially honest man.”

Verges said to the watchmen, “If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the child’s nurse and tell her to quiet the child.”

“What do we do if the nurse is asleep and does not hear us?” a watchman asked.

“Why, then, depart quietly,” Dogberry said, “and let the child wake the nurse with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baas will never answer a calf when he bleats [moos]. If the nurse does not hear her own child, she will certainly not hear you.”

“That is very true,” Verges said.

“You have one more duty,” Dogberry said. “You, constable, are to present [represent] the Prince’s own person. That makes you the boss. If you meet the Prince in the night, you may order him to stop.”

“No,” Verges said. “I don’t think he is allowed to do that.”

“I bet you five shillings to one that he can: Any man who has studied the statutes [statutes / laws] knows that he can order the Prince to halt. That is, of course, as long as the Prince is willing to halt. Indeed, the watchmen ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to order a man to halt against his will.”

“Yes,” Verges said. “That is right.”

“Ha! I am right!” Dogberry said. “Well, watchmen, good night. If anything important happens, call me. Keep your fellows’ secrets as well as you keep your own. Good night!”

He added to Verges, “Let’s go, neighbor.”

A watchman said to the other watchmen, “Well, watchmen, we know our duty: Let us sit here on the church bench until two o’clock, and then go home to bed.”

Dogberry remembered one more thing to tell the watchmen: “One word more, honest neighbors. Please keep watch around the house of Signior Leonato. Because of the wedding being held there tomorrow, a great deal of bustle is going on there tonight. Adieu. Be vigilant [vigilant], please.”

Dogberry and Verges exited.

Almost immediately, Borachio and Conrade appeared on the street. The watchmen, unnoticed by Borachio and Conrade, stayed in the shadows.

“Conrade!” Borachio said.

A watchman whispered, “Let’s be quiet and listen to these people who are out so late at night.”

“Conrade, I say!”

“Here I am, Borachio. I am standing by your elbow.”

“My elbow was itching. I thought I had a scab there.”

“Don’t call me a scab. I will get you back for calling me that. What do you want?”

“Stand here with me under this overhanging part of a roof because rain is drizzling. I will, like a true drunkard — for there is truth in wine — tell you all of a tale.”

A watchman whispered, “I suspect foul play. Let’s listen carefully.”

“Know that tonight I have earned from Don John a thousand coins,” Borachio said.

“You must have done something evil to get it, but is it possible that any villainy should cost so much?” Conrade said.

“You should ask instead if it is possible that any villain should be so rich,” Borachio said. “But when rich villains have need of poor villains, poor villains may ask for as much money as they wish.”

“Still, I wonder how you could make so much money.”

“You are showing that you are uninformed. You know, don’t you, that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.”

Borachio thought, *By that I mean that a man is not identical to his clothing. Dress an evil man in a preacher's clothing and people will likely think that the evil man is a good man. Dress a woman in someone else's clothing and on a dark night other people may think that the imposter is the woman whom the imposter is impersonating.*

"It is just clothing."

"I mean, the fashion," Borachio said.

"Yes, the fashion is the fashion."

"I may as well say that the fool is the fool," Borachio said. "But don't you see what a deformed thief fashion is and how it robs young men of their money?"

A watchman whispered, "They are talking about a thief named De Formed. I have heard about him for the past seven years. He is fashionable and dresses like a gentleman. I remember his name well."

"Did you hear somebody?" Borachio asked.

"The noise was caused by the movement of the weathervane on this house," Conrade replied.

"As I was saying, do you see what a deforming thief fashion is? Fashion makes all the hot-blooded young men between age fourteen and thirty-five giddily change their clothes. Sometimes they wear the fashion of the Pharaoh's soldiers in a grimy painting. Sometimes they wear the fashion of the god Bel's priests in the old church-window — you remember that the King of Persia had these priests killed after Daniel denounced them because they worshipped a false god. Sometimes they wear the fashion of the shaven Hercules in the filthy, worm-eaten tapestry in which his codpiece seems as big as his club."

"I see," Conrade said. "I understand that a man can wear out clothing by wearing it and so make it unwearable, but that changing fashions render much more clothing unwearable. Fashion makes young men giddy, but hasn't fashion made you giddy, too? You have been distracted by talk about fashion and so have not told me what you wanted to tell me."

"That is not true," Borachio said. "The point that I wanted to make about fashion is that a person is not identical to the clothing the person wears. Tonight, I wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman attendant. Margaret wore some of Hero's clothing, and I called her by the name 'Hero.' She leaned out of Hero's bedroom window as she bid me a thousand times good night. I am telling this tale badly — I should have told you first that Don Pedro, Claudio, and Don John witnessed me wooing Margaret — she and I had quite the friendly encounter! — from their positions in the garden. Don John arranged the whole thing."

"And they thought Margaret was Hero?" Conrade said.

"Two of them did," Borachio said. "Don Pedro and Claudio thought that, but Don John, who is a devil, knew that the woman I wooed is Margaret. Don John deliberately convinced Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero is unfaithful. He did that partly by the lies he told them. Those lies made them suspicious. Don Pedro and Claudio were also deceived by the darkness of the night, which helped them to believe that Hero was being unfaithful. Most of all, however, they were deceived by my villainy. My actions confirmed the slander that Don John had cast against Hero. Enraged, Claudio departed. He swore that he would meet Hero, as he had promised, the

next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, he would disgrace her by telling everyone what he had seen during the night. He swore that he would not marry her but would instead send her without a husband back to her father.”

The first watchman had heard enough; he shouted, “We arrest you in the Prince’s name!”

The second watchman said, “Someone, go and get Dogberry, the right master constable. We have here recovered [uncovered] the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.”

Borachio thought, *This watchman probably meant to say “treachery” instead of “lechery,” but considering the way I was wooing Margaret, “lechery” is quite accurate.*

“A thief named De Formed should be arrested, too,” the first watchman said. “I will know him because he wears one lock of his hair long.”

Conrade started to attempt to talk himself out of trouble: “Sirs, sirs —”

The second watchman said, “You will be forced to reveal the whereabouts of De Formed, I bet you.”

Conrade said, “Sirs —”

“Do not speak,” the second watchman said. “We order you to let us obey [order] you to go with us.”

Both Borachio and Conrade knew that the watchmen who had arrested them were fools when it came to using language, but they also knew that they were legally arrested.

Borachio said to Conrade, “We are likely to prove to be a goodly commodity, being taken up by these men with their bills.”

Borachio thought, *Conrade will appreciate the joke, although these watchmen will not. My sentence has two meanings, one legal and one commercial: 1) “We are likely to prove to be a valuable catch, now that we have been arrested by these watchmen with their weapons.” 2) “We are likely to prove to be a valuable parcel of goods, now that we have been bought by these men with their bills of credit.”*

Conrade appreciated the puns and replied with puns of his own: “We are a commodity in question, I warrant you.”

Conrade thought, *Borachio will appreciate the joke, although these watchmen will not. My sentence has two meanings, one legal and one commercial: 1) “We are a catch that is subject to judicial examination now that we are under warranted and legal arrest.” 2) “We are a purchase of doubtful value, I promise you.”*

Conrade knew that the watchmen had the legal authority to arrest Borachio and him, so he did not fight them but instead said, “We will obey you.”

The watchmen set off with Borachio and Conrade to find Dogberry.

Hero was talking with her gentlewomen attendants, Margaret and Ursula, in her bedroom.

“Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and ask her to get up,” Hero said.

“I will, lady,” Ursula replied.

“And ask her to come here,” Hero said.

“I will,” Ursula said as she exited.

“Truly, I think that your other rabato — your ornamented collar — is better than this one,” Margaret said.

Margaret had worn this rabato the previous night when Borachio had wooed her.

“No, good Margaret,” Hero said. “I will wear this one.”

“Really, I don’t think that this one is as good as the other one, and I think that Beatrice will agree with me,” Margaret said.

“If she does, then she is a fool, and so are you,” Hero said, not unkindly. “I will wear no rabato except this one.”

“I exceedingly like your new decorative head-dress in the other room,” Margaret said, “but I wish that the hair that is part of the head-dress were a trifle browner. In addition, your gown is unusually fashionable, truly, and I believe that although I have seen the Duchess of Milan’s gown that is so well praised.”

“Her gown is more fashionable than all the others,” Hero said.

“Compared to your gown, hers is a fancy dressing gown,” Margaret said. “Her gown has cloth of gold and cuts in the sleeves to reveal the even richer material underneath, and it is laced with silver and set with pearls. It has tight sleeves that go down to the wrist and loose sleeves that are draped from the shoulders. The shirts are trimmed at the hem with blue silk. Her gown is extremely fancy, but your fine, dainty, elegant, graceful, and excellent gown is worth ten of hers.”

“May God give me joy when I wear it because my heart is exceedingly heavy!” Hero said.

“Tonight it will be heavier by the weight of a man as he lies on you,” Margaret said.

“I am shocked!” Hero said. “Aren’t you ashamed to speak like that?”

“Like what, lady?” Margaret asked. “I am not speaking of anything dishonorable. Marriage is honorable, and so is the wedding night. Marriage is so honorable that it is honorable even for a beggar. Your betrothed, Claudio, is honorable even before he is married. I think you would have preferred that I say that your heart will be heavier by the weight of your husband — not just any man — as he lies on you. And if all goes well, you will be heavier because you will become pregnant. But you know what I meant; you know I meant no offense. I was talking about the weight of your soon-to-be husband, and there is no harm in that — as long as it is the right husband and the right wife. Let the weight be heavy and not light because a wife ought to feel weight on her on her wedding night, and a light woman is a frivolous woman — a wanton, unchaste woman. Ask Beatrice what she thinks about this — here she comes.”

Hero said, “Good morning, Beatrice.”

“Good morning, sweet Hero.”

“How are you feeling?” Hero said. “You sound as if you were out of tune.”

“The only tune I am in is ill,” Beatrice said. “I am sick.”

“If you want a tune that is not ill, I recommend ‘Light of Love,’” Margaret said. “That is a light, not heavy, tune, and it has no part for a man. It begins with clapping. If you will sing the song, I will dance it.”

“‘Light of love’ means wanton,” Beatrice said. “If you dance to that tune, you will have light heels — feet that are raised high in the air and wide apart. If your husband has lots of stables, he will also have lots of barns and because you and he will roll in the hay the result will be lots of bairns.”

“That is an illegitimate argument,” Margaret said. “I have no husband, and so I kick your argument away with my light heels.”

“It is almost five o’clock, Hero,” Beatrice said. “It is time you were ready. But truly, I am exceedingly ill!” She sighed, “Ho-hum.”

“Are you sighing because you want a hawk, a horse, or a husband?” Margaret asked.

“If the word ‘ache’ began with and sounded like the letter that begins ‘hawk,’ ‘horse,’ and ‘husband,’ I would be sighing because I have an aitch,” Beatrice said.

“Well, unless you have completely renounced your old views, there will be no more sailing by the North Star,” Margaret said.

Beatrice was mystified: “What does the fool mean, I wonder.”

Margaret thought, *I think that Beatrice is sighing because of a different reason than illness. I think that she is sighing because she is in love with and wants to marry Benedick. Unless she has renounced her view that she wants never to be married, then there is no more trusting in signs of love such as sighs — or in anything we used to believe in, such as that the Pole Star, aka the North Star, indicates where the North lies.*

“What means the fool?” Margaret said. “I mean nothing, but I hope that God sends all people their heart’s desire!”

Hero knew that Margaret was talking — not explicitly — about Beatrice’s being in love, so she decided to change the subject lest Beatrice grow suspicious: “These are the gloves that Claudio sent me; they have been excellently perfumed.”

Beatrice said, “I am stuffed up, Hero. I cannot smell.”

Margaret knew that Beatrice meant that her nose was stuffed up, but she made a joke out of “stuffed”: “You are supposed to be a virgin, and yet you are stuffed. Has a man stuffed your womb with a baby? Something good can come from catching a cold!”

“God help me!” Beatrice said. “God help me! For how long have you made being a wit your profession?”

“Ever since you stopped using your wit,” Margaret said, thinking, *You still don’t know that we have tricked you into thinking that Benedick loves you.*

Margaret added, “Don’t you think that my wit becomes me rarely?”

Beatrice knew that Margaret meant ‘rarely’ to mean ‘splendidly,’ but she decided to joke that ‘rarely’ meant ‘seldomly’: “Your wit is not seen enough; you should wear it in your cap so that everyone can see it. After all, fools wear coxcombs on their heads.”

She added, “Truly, I am sick.”

Margaret said, “Get some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and apply it over your heart: It is the only thing that will help you to get over a sudden nausea.”

Carduus Benedictus was a medicine composed of Holy Thistle. Thistles have prickles, and Hero punned, “Margaret, you are pricking her with a thistle.”

Margaret thought, *Wholly thistle is nothing but pricks, and I am thinking a lot about pricks today although not the ones on thistles. I have also been thinking about holes.*

Beatrice, of course, had been thinking about Benedick quite a lot recently, and she was suspicious because of the mention of Carduus Benedictus: “Benedictus! Why did you mention Benedictus? Does your mention of this Benedictus have some hidden meaning?”

“Some hidden meaning? No, there is no hidden meaning. All I meant is plain Holy Thistle,” Margaret lied. “You may think perhaps that I think you are in love. No, I am not such a fool as to think what I wish, nor am I such a fool as to wish not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love or that you will be in love or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was just like you in his opinion of marriage, and yet he has become a man who is like other men: He swore he would never marry, and yet now, despite what he swore, he metaphorically eats his meat without complaining. I do not know how you are changing and being converted the way that he was converted to a new way of thinking, but I think that you are beginning to look with your eyes as other women do. You are becoming like other women.”

Margaret thought, *Benedick swore that he would never marry, and yet he has fallen in love. The same is becoming true of Beatrice.*

“What pace is this that your tongue keeps?” Beatrice asked. “Your tongue moves rapidly. What are you trying to say?”

“The pace my tongue keeps is not a false gallop,” Margaret said. “It is a real gallop and not a mere cantor. The pace of my tongue is true, and all I say is true.”

Ursula entered the room and said, “Hero, get dressed. Don Pedro, Count Claudio, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town have come to escort you to church.”

“Help me dress, good Beatrice, good Margaret, and good Ursula,” Hero said.

— 3.5 —

In another room in Leonato’s house, Leonato was talking to Dogberry and Verges, who had come on official business. Leonato, who was the Governor of Messina, greatly outranked and was much wealthier than Dogberry and Verges.

“What do you want, honest neighbor?” Leonato asked Dogberry.

“Sir, I would have some confidence [confidential conference / confidential conversation] with you that decerns [concerns] you greatly.”

“Keep it brief, please,” Leonato said. “You can see that it is a busy time for me.”

“Truly, it is, sir,” Dogberry replied.

“Yes, in truth it is, sir,” Verges said.

“What do we need to talk about, my good friends?” Leonato asked.

“Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the subject,” Dogberry said. “He tends to ramble because he is an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt [sharp] as, God help us, I would desire they were; but, truly, he is as honest as the skin between his brows. His eyebrows do not meet, and so we can see that he is trustworthy. Also, he has not been marked on his forehead as punishment for a horrible crime.”

“That is true,” Verges said. “I thank God that I am as honest as any man living who is an old man and no more honest than I am.”

“Comparisons are odorous [odious],” Dogberry said to Verges. “*Palabras*, neighbor Verges.”

Leonato thought, *Pocas palabras means “few words” in Spanish, and that is probably what Dogberry meant, but Dogberry said palabras — words — and he has been saying word after word without saying anything of significance.*

“Neighbors, you are tedious,” Leonato said. He was eager to leave and go to the church for his daughter’s wedding.

Dogberry did not know what “tedious” meant, but he was willing to guess its meaning: “It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke’s officers.”

Leonato thought, *Dogberry meant to say that Verges and he are the Duke’s poor — that is, impoverished — officers. These men are the Duke’s officers — that is, they are Don Pedro’s officers — and people really ought to feel sorry for the poor — unlucky — Duke because he has such sorry officers.*

Dogberry continued, “But truly, for my own part, if I were as tedious [wealthy and generous] as a King, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.”

“You would bestow all your tediousness on me?” Leonato asked.

“Yes, and I would do the same thing even if the tediousness were a thousand pounds more than it is; for I hear as good exclamation [acclamation] of your worship as of any man in the city; and although I am only a poor man, I am glad to hear it.”

“And so am I,” Verges said.

*They said that they are glad to hear it, Leonato thought. Grammatically speaking, they said that they are glad to hear that they are poor men. Both of them are poor men in more ways than one. Of course, Dogberry and Verges meant to say that they are happy to hear that I am acclaimed, and I am glad to hear that.*

“Please let me know what you have to say to me,” Leonato said.

“Sir,” Verges said, “our watchmen last night, excepting [respecting] your worship’s presence, have arrested a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.”

Leonato thought, *Verges said that the watchmen have arrested a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina, excepting your worship’s presence — that is, the watchmen have arrested a couple of knaves who are as arrant as anyone in Messina with the exception of me, Leonato. In other words, I am more arrant than the knaves these watchmen have arrested.*

Dogberry interrupted although Verges was telling Leonato what he wanted and needed to know: “Verges is a good old man, sir. He will be talking. As they say, when old age is in, wit is out. God help us! It is a world to see.”

Leonato thought, *Dogberry is mixing up his proverbs. The proverb he is thinking of is this: When ale is in, wit is out. Unfortunately, his mangled proverb — when old age is in, wit is out — is often true.*

Dogberry complimented his friend, “Well said, neighbor Verges,” then he said to Leonato, “Well, God is a good man; God must have a plan for Verges despite Verges’ loss of his wits. If two men ride on a horse, one man must ride behind — no two men are equal in ability. Verges is an honest soul, sir. Truly, he is as honest as any man who ever broke bread; but just as we know that God is to be worshipped, we know that we must thank God for all things. All men are not alike — it is a pity!”

Leonato said, “Verges is not your equal.” He thought, *That is true. As much of a fool as Verges is, he is not Dogberry’s equal.*

“God gives us our gifts,” Dogberry replied.

“I must leave you now and go to the church,” Leonato said.

“One more word, sir,” Dogberry said. “Our watchmen, sir, have indeed comprehended [apprehended] two auspicious [suspicious] persons, and we would like to have them this morning examined before your worship.”

“Examine these men yourself, and then come and tell me later what you find out,” Leonato said. “As you should be able to see, I am in a hurry.”

“It shall be suffigance [sufficient],” Dogberry said.

“Drink some wine before you go,” Leonato said. “Fare you well.”

A messenger entered the room and said to Leonato, “My lord, they are waiting for you to give your daughter away to her husband.”

“I will come immediately,” Leonato said. “I am ready.”

Leonato and the messenger departed.

“Verges, good partner, go and get the sexton Francis Seacole,” Dogberry said. “Tell him to bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. We will now examination [examine] these two auspicious [suspicious] men.”

“We must do so wisely.”

“We will not lack wit, I promise you,” Dogberry said. He pointed to his head and said, “Here is something that shall drive some of them to a non-come.”

If Leonato had been present, he would have thought, *Dogberry meant that he would make the two men non-plussed — so confused that they won't know what to think. Actually, I think that is the effect that Dogberry has on many people. Dogberry's word — “non-comp” — also brings to mind the Latin phrase non compos mentis, which means out of one's mind. A few minutes' conversation with Dogberry can have that effect on the hearer.*

Dogberry continued, “We need the learned writer to set down our excommunication [examination / conversation / communication] with the prisoners. Meet me at the jail.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, and some attendants were in the church, ready for the wedding.

Leonato said, “Be brief, Friar Francis. Use only the short and simple form of the marriage ceremony, and afterwards you can say your homily and tell the new husband and wife their particular duties to each other.”

Friar Francis asked Claudio, “Do you come here, my lord, to marry this lady?”

Claudio replied, “No.”

Leonato said, “Claudio has come here to *be married to* Hero. You, friar, have come here to marry Hero to Claudio.”

“Lady, do you come here to be married to this count?” Friar Francis asked.

Hero replied, “I do.”

“If either of you know of any secret reason why you should not be lawfully joined together in marriage, I order you on your souls to say so.”

“Do you know of any reason why we should not be married, Hero?” Claudio asked.

“I know of none,” Hero replied.

“Do you know of any, Count Claudio?” Friar Francis asked.

“I dare to answer for him,” Leonato said confidently. “He knows of none.”

“Oh, what men dare do!” Claudio exclaimed. “What men may do! What men daily do, not knowing what they do!”

Benedick idly thought, *Claudio is making interjections. I remember learning from my study of William Lyly’s Latin grammar that some injections are those of laughter — for example, ah, ha, he.*

“Stand aside, Friar Francis,” Claudio said. “Pardon me.”

He then said to Leonato, “Will you freely and without restrictions give me this maiden, your daughter?”

“As freely, son, as God gave her to me.”

“And what have I to give you in return, whose worth is the equal of this rich and precious gift?”

Don Pedro answered for Leonato, “Nothing, unless you render her again.”

Leonato thought that Don Pedro meant that the gift that Claudio could render would be a grandchild, but Claudio knew that Don Pedro meant for him to give Hero literally back to her father.

Claudio said, "Sweet Don Pedro, you teach me noble thankfulness and true gratitude."

He then said, "There, Leonato, take Hero back again. I will not marry her. Do not give this rotten orange to your friend. She is like an orange that looks good on the outside but is rotten inside. Hero has only the outward signs and appearance of honor."

Tears trickled from Claudio's eyes.

He said, "Look how she is blushing now like a virgin! With what false assurance and false display of truth can cunning sin disguise itself! Doesn't the blood that is rushing to Hero's face in a blush seem to be believable evidence of a virgin's simple virtue? Would you not swear, all you who see her, that she were a maiden, a virgin, after you witness this blush? But she is not a virgin. She knows the heat of a lecherous bed; she blushes because she knows that she is guilty, not because she is modest."

"What do you mean, my lord?" Leonato asked.

"I mean not to be married and not to knit my soul to a woman who has been proven to be a slut."

"Claudio," Leonato said, "if you, to test Hero, have overcome the resistance of her youth and have taken her virginity from her —"

Claudio interrupted, "I know what you are going to say. You will say that if I have slept with her that she embraced me as if I were already her husband, and that our formal engagement will help excuse the sin of premarital sex. No, Leonato, I never tempted her with improper suggestions. I always treated her the way a brother treats a sister; I always showed her only modest sincerity and appropriate love."

"Have I ever seemed other than modest or appropriate to you?" Hero asked.

"That is enough acting from you!" Claudio said. "I will denounce your false appearance. You seemed to me to resemble the virgin Diana, goddess of the Moon. You seemed to be as chaste as is the flower bud before its petals are fully opened. But you are more intemperate in your sexual passion than Venus, goddess of love, or those pampered horses that are known to rage in savage sensuality."

"Are you ill?" Hero said. "Is that what is making you say things that are so far from being the truth?"

Leonato said to Don Pedro, "Sweet Prince, why aren't you saying something?"

"What should I say?" Don Pedro replied. "I am dishonored because I have helped my dear friend to become engaged to a common prostitute."

"Do I really hear these words, or am I dreaming?" Leonato asked.

Don John replied, "Sir, these words have really been spoken, and these things are true."

Benedick thought, *This does not look like a wedding.*

"You say that these things are true!" Hero said. "Oh, God!"

“Leonato, do you see me standing here?” Claudio asked. “Do you see Don Pedro standing here? Is this Don Pedro’s brother standing here? Is this face Hero’s face? Are our eyes our own? The answer to all these questions is yes. You are awake; you are not dreaming.”

“I agree that I am awake, but what is going on here, Count Claudio?”

“Let me but ask your daughter one question, and, by that fatherly and kindly power that you have over her, tell her to answer truly,” Claudio said.

“I order you to answer his question truthfully, Hero, my daughter,” Leonato said.

“May God defend me!” Hero said. “I am attacked from all sides! What kind of catechising do you call this?”

“The first question of the Church of England Catechism is this: ‘What is your name?’” Claudio said. “I will ask you one question that will reveal what your real name is.”

He thought, *Your real name is a common one: Whore.*

Hero replied, “Isn’t my name Hero? Who can blot that name with any just reproach?”

“I know the answer to that question,” Claudio said. “Hero can blot her own name. Hero can blot out the virtue of Hero. Here is my question: What man did you talk with last night between the hours of midnight and one a.m. at your bedroom window? If you are a virgin, answer this question.”

“I talked with no man at that hour,” Hero replied.

“Why, then you are no virgin,” Don Pedro said. “Leonato, I am sorry you must hear this bad news: Upon my honor, I, Don John, and this grieving Count Claudio saw Hero and heard Hero at that hour last night talk with a ruffian at her bedroom window. That man, a lecherous villain, stated that he and Hero had enjoyed a thousand vile encounters in secret.”

“Those thousand vile encounters are not to be spoken of,” Don John said. “The language that must be used to speak about those encounters would offend everyone who heard it. Pretty lady, I am sorry that you have been so lewd and unchaste.”

“Hero, if you were only half as beautiful inside as you are outside, you would have been like the mythical Hero, who committed suicide after her loved one, Leander, died while attempting to swim the Hellespont to visit her,” Claudio said. “But farewell, most foul and most fair Hero. Farewell, you woman of pure impiety and impious purity! Because of you, I will stay away from love. My eyes shall be suspicious. Every time I look at a beautiful woman I will think of impurity. Never again will I be gracious to a beautiful woman.”

“Does any man here have a dagger that will stab me?” Leonato asked.

Hero fainted.

“How are you, Hero?” Beatrice asked. “Why have you fainted?”

Don John said, “Come, let us go. These evil things that have been revealed to the light of day have overwhelmed her.”

Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio exited.

Benedick normally would have left with Don Pedro and Claudio, but he loved Beatrice, and Beatrice was here, so he stayed.

Benedick asked Beatrice, “How is Hero?”

“Dead, I think,” Beatrice replied. “Help, uncle! Hero! Wake up, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!”

“Fate, let her die!” Leonato said. “Death is the fairest cover for her shame that I can now ask for.”

“Hero, wake up!” Beatrice said.

“Take comfort in being alive, lady,” Friar Francis said to Hero as she slowly regained consciousness.

Leonato said to Hero as she lay on the floor of the church, “Are you looking up?”

“Yes,” Friar Francis said. “That is good.”

“Good?” Leonato said. “It is hardly good. Why, doesn’t every earthly thing cry shame upon her? Can she deny the guilt that her blushes reveal? Do not live, Hero. Do not open your eyes. If I did not think that you would not quickly die, if I thought that your spirit could bear your shame, I myself would kill you. If the army of your shames is not enough to kill you, I would act as the rearguard of the army and kill you.

“I used to grieve because I had only one child. I used to be angry at Nature because I had only one child. But when that child is Hero, one child is too many! Why did I have a child? Why did I ever think you were lovely? It would have been better if instead of having you, I had been charitable and adopted the child of a beggar who came to my gates. That way, when the child sinned and ruined her reputation, I might have said, ‘No part of this child is mine; this shameful child has come from unknown loins.’ But you were my own child and I loved you and I praised you and I was proud of you. For you I had such great love that I had little love for myself. But now Hero has fallen into a pit of ink and the wide sea has too little water to wash her clean again and not enough salt to preserve her and keep her from stinking.”

“Sir, sir, be patient,” Benedick said. “Calm down. As for me, I am so amazed that I do not know what to say.”

“I swear on my soul that Hero has been slandered,” Beatrice said.

Benedick said to Beatrice, “In our culture, it is normal for two unmarried adults of the same sex to sleep in the same bed. Did you and Hero sleep in the same bed last night?”

“No, we did not,” Beatrice replied, “but for the entire year before last night we slept in the same bed.”

“This confirms Count Claudio’s story!” Leonato said. “Before, the story was so strong that it was as if it were made with ribs of iron! But now it is even stronger! Would the two Princes — Don Pedro and Don John — lie, and Claudio lie, a man who so loved Hero that he cried while speaking of her foulness? Let us leave Hero! Let her die!”

Friar Francis said, “Listen to me for a minute. I have kept quiet too long about these events. I have been looking at Hero, and I have seen a thousand blushes begin to appear in her cheeks

only to be swept away by innocent and angelic paleness. And in her eyes has appeared a fire that burns against the lies that these Princes told against the truth of her virginity.

“Call me a fool and do not trust either my education or my observations, which combined with my years of experience have given me knowledge. Do not trust my age, reputation, position, or holiness. You can do all of these things to me if I am wrong and Hero turns out to be guilty.

“I believe completely that Hero is innocent.”

Leonato said, “Friar, she cannot be innocent. The only good quality that she has left is that she will not add the sin of perjury to her damnation. Hero has not denied that she is unchaste. Why are you trying to cover up her guilt when she has been proven to be guilty?”

Friar Francis said to Hero, who had fully regained consciousness, “With which man are you accused of sinning?”

“I don’t know,” Hero replied. “You will have to ask those who accuse me. If I know more of any man alive than that which a virgin’s modesty allows, let all my sins be unforgiven and let me be damned!”

She said to Leonato, “Father, if you can prove that any man has ever talked with me at an indecent hour or that I talked to any man last night, then disown me, hate me, and torture me to death!”

“Don Pedro and Don John have made some kind of mistake,” Friar Francis said. “They have made a strange misunderstanding.”

Benedick said, “Two of the three men who have accused Hero of unchasteness are completely honorable. If they have been misled, they have been misled by Don John the bastard, who enjoys creating conflicts.”

“I don’t know what to believe,” Leonato said. “If these three men have spoken the truth about my daughter, I will tear her to pieces with my own hands, but if they have wronged her with slander, even the highest ranking of them will hear from me. Time has not yet dried up my blood, age has not yet eaten my intelligence, fortune has not been my enemy, and my faults have not bereft me of all my friends. These three men will find that I, awakened in such a matter, have enough strength of limb and policy of mind, as well as ability in means and choice of friends, that I will be able to thoroughly get revenge on them.”

“Wait a while before you act to get revenge,” Friar Francis said. “Listen to my advice now. Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio left your daughter when she seemed to be dead. Let her for a while be secretly kept indoors in your house, and tell everyone that she is dead. Ostentatiously mourn her, and on your family’s old tomb hang mournful epitaphs and do all the rites that are proper for a burial.”

“Why?” Leonato asked. “What is the purpose of doing this?”

“If this plan works well,” Friar Francis said, “slander will change to remorse. That will be good, but it is not the main thing that we will be hoping for. We hope for a better result. Because Hero died — we will say — at the same moment in which she was accused, she shall be lamented, pitied, and excused by every hearer. It commonly happens that what we have we do not properly prize while we have and enjoy it. But once it is lost and we lack it, then we

greatly value it and recognize the good qualities that it has that we did not previously recognize. This will happen to Claudio. When he hears that Hero died because of his words of accusation, he will remember her and think about her. He will remember all of Hero's good qualities and even exaggerate them. It will be as if they appear before him in new and rich clothing. She will appear in his mind more moving, more delicate, and fuller of life than she was when she was alive. Then Claudio will mourn, if love for Hero was ever in his heart, and he will wish that he had not accused her of being unchaste, not even if he thinks that the accusation is true. Let us follow this plan. Chances are, things will turn out even better than I hope. If nothing else, people will talk about Hero's death rather than her supposed unchasteness. And if things do not work out, then you, Claudio, can keep her hidden, as would be best because of her ruined reputation, in some reclusive and religious convent, away from all eyes, gossip, thoughts, and insults."

Benedick said, "Signior Leonato, take the friar's advice. Though you know how much I respect Don Pedro and Claudio, I swear that I will participate in this plan as secretly and justly as your own soul and body."

"I am drowning in grief, and I will grasp at even the thinnest string I can find and hope to be drawn to safety," Leonato said.

"It is good that you agree to participate in this plan," Friar Francis said to Leonato. "Let us leave immediately. Strange illnesses require strange cures. Come, Hero, you must die in order to live. Your wedding perhaps is only postponed. Have patience, be calm, and endure these present ills."

Everyone except for Benedick and Beatrice left.

Benedick said gently, "Lady Beatrice, have you been crying all this time?"

"Yes, and I will cry a while longer."

"I do not want you to cry."

"What you want does not matter," Beatrice replied. "I am crying because I want to cry."

"I truly believe that Hero has been wronged."

"A man who could make things right would deserve much from me," Beatrice said.

"Is there any way I can deserve such a reward?"

"The way to earn such a reward is very straightforward and direct, but it is not for you," Beatrice said.

"May a man do it?"

"It is the duty of a man, but it is not your duty."

"I love nothing in the world as much I love you," Benedick said. "Isn't that strange?"

"It is as strange as another thing that I don't understand: It is as possible for me to say that I love nothing as much as I love you — but do not believe what I just said. I confess nothing, and I deny nothing. I feel sorry for my cousin."

“I swear by my sword, Beatrice, that you love me.”

“Do not swear. You may have to eat your words.”

“I swear by my sword, Beatrice, that you love me, and I will make anyone who says that I do not love you eat my sword.”

“Won’t you go back on your vow that you love me and eat your words?”

“I will not eat my words with any sauce that can be prepared to season them,” Benedick said. “I swear again that I love you.”

“Why, then God forgive me!”

“For what offence, Beatrice?”

“Your swearing that you love me came in a happy hour. I was about to go against our societal conventions and say to you ‘I love you’ before you — the man — confessed to me that you love me.”

“Say to me now what you were going to say to me before, and swear to it with all of your heart,” Benedick said.

“I love you with so much of my heart that none of my heart is left to swear with.”

“Tell me to do anything for you.”

“Kill Claudio,” Beatrice replied.

“Not for all the whole wide world.”

“You kill me by saying no,” Beatrice said. “Farewell.”

“Stay for a while, sweet Beatrice.”

“I am gone, though I am physically here. There is no love in you for me. Therefore, please let me go.”

“Beatrice —”

“I am leaving.”

“Let us part as friends.”

“You must think that it is easier to be friends with me than to fight Claudio, who is now my enemy.”

“Is Claudio your enemy?”

“Why shouldn’t he be?” Beatrice asked. “Hasn’t he proved himself to be a thorough villain, one who has slandered, scorned, and dishonored my cousin Hero? I wish that I were a man! Look at what Claudio has done! He held Hero’s hands until they were in church to join hands in marriage, and then with barefaced slander and unmitigated rancor he publicly accused her of unchasteness. I wish I were a man! If I were, I would eat Claudio’s heart in the public marketplace.”

“Listen to me, Beatrice —”

“Talk with a man outside her bedroom window! A likely story!”

“But Beatrice —”

“Sweet Hero! She has been wronged, she has been slandered, she has been undone.”

“Bea —”

“The three men who accused her are two Princes and a Count! Surely, we heard a Princely testimony and testimony from a goodly Count — Count Candy! He is a sweet gallant, surely! Oh, I wish that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend who would be a man for my sake! But manhood has melted into curtsies, valor has melted into compliment, and men are composed only of talk and not deeds — and such pretty talk, too. A man is now considered to be as valiant as Hercules even if he only tells a lie and swears that it is true. I cannot become a man by wishing I were a man; therefore, I will die a woman by grieving.”

“Wait, good Beatrice. I swear by this hand that I love you.”

“If you want to show that you love me, you will have to do more with your hand than swear by it.”

“Do you truly believe in your soul that Count Claudio has wronged Hero?”

“I am as sure of that as I am sure that I have a thought or a soul.”

“That is enough,” Benedick said. “I will do what you want me to do: I will challenge Claudio to a duel. Let me kiss your hand, and so I leave you. I swear by this hand that he shall pay dearly for his sin. As you hear of me, so think of me. Judge me by my actions, not by my words. Go and comfort Hero. I must tell other people that she is dead, and so, farewell.”

He kissed her hand and exited. Beatrice left to go and comfort Hero.

#### — 4.2 —

In a prison, Dogberry, Verges, and the sexton were wearing their official black gowns. Some watchmen were also present, as were Conrade and Borachio.

Dogberry asked, “Is our whole dissembly [assembly] present?”

“We need a stool and a cushion for the sexton,” Verges said.

A stool and a cushion were brought for the sexton.

The sexton asked, “Who are the malefactors?”

“That would be my partner and me,” Dogberry said.

“That is true,” Verges said. “We have been exhibitioned [commissioned] to examine these men.”

The sexton smiled, realizing that neither Dogberry nor Verges understood the meaning of the word “malefactors.”

The sexton said, "But who are the offenders who are to be examined? Let them come before Dogberry, the master constable."

"Yes, let them come before me," Dogberry said.

Conrade and Borachio stood up, and Dogberry asked Borachio, "What is your name, friend?"

"Borachio."

Dogberry said to the sexton, "Please, write down 'Borachio.'" Then he asked Conrade, "And what is your name?"

"I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade."

"Write down 'master gentleman Conrade.' Men, do you serve God and obey His laws?"

Conrade and Borachio replied, "Yes, sir, we hope we do."

Dogberry said to the sexton, "Write down that they hope they serve God, and write God first; for God defend [forbid] that such villains should be named before God."

He then said to Conrade and Borachio, "Masters, it has been proven already that you are little better than lying criminals; and soon people will think that you are lying criminals. How do you defend yourselves?"

Conrade replied, "Sir, we say that we are not lying criminals."

Dogberry said to Verges and the sexton, "He is a marvelously intelligent fellow, I assure you, but I will outwit him."

He said to Borachio, "Come here and let me speak to you away from Conrade. I say to you, it is thought that you are lying criminals."

"Sir, I say to you that we are not lying criminals."

"Well, stand aside," Dogberry said. "By God, they are both telling the same story!"

He said to the sexton, "Have you written down that they are not lying criminals?"

The sexton replied, "Master constable Dogberry, you are not carrying out the investigation in the right way. You need to talk to the watchmen who are accusing these two men."

"Yes, that is the efastest [deftest / quickest] way," Dogberry said. "Let the watchmen come forth. Masters, I order you, in the name of the Prince, to accuse these men."

The first watchmen said, "This man — Borachio — said, sir, that Don John, Don Pedro's brother, is a villain."

"Write down that Don John is a villain," Dogberry said.

He thought a moment, reflected that Don John had a high rank, and then he said, "Why, this is obvious perjury [slander], to call a Prince's brother a villain."

If Don John had been present, he would have thought, *No, it is not slander. I really am a villain.*

Borachio said, “Master constable —”

“Please be quiet,” Dogberry said. “I do not like the way you look, I promise you.”

The sexton, who had decided that he ought to take over the investigation, asked the second watchman, “Did you hear this accused man say anything else?”

“He said that he had received a thousand coins from Don John in return for falsely accusing the Lady Hero.”

“Being paid for falsely accusing the Lady Hero is as obvious burglary [fraud / being paid to slander someone] as was ever committed,” Dogberry said.

“Yes, it is,” Verges agreed.

“What else did you two learn?” the sexton asked the two watchmen.

“We learned that Count Claudio, who believed the slander, intended to disgrace Hero before the whole congregation in the church and not marry her,” the first watchman said.

Dogberry said to Borachio, “Villain! You will be condemned to everlasting redemption [damnation] for this.”

“Did you two learn anything else?”

“That is everything we learned,” a watchman said.

The sexton said to Conrade and Borachio, “And here is more, masters, than you can deny. This morning Don John secretly fled from the city. Apparently, he was aware that you two had been arrested and that his evil plot would be revealed. Hero was accused in the manner you described, and as you described, Count Claudio refused to marry her. Because of the grief she suffered, Hero died.”

The sexton said to Dogberry, “Master constable, let these men be bound and be brought quickly to Leonato’s house. I will go there now ahead of you and tell him the result of our investigation.”

The sexton exited.

Dogberry said, “Let the prisoners be opinioned [pinioned / bound].”

“Let’s bind their hands,” Verges said.

Dogberry moved toward Conrade, who had not taken part in Don John’s evil plot and so was innocent. Conrade objected to being bound and shouted, “Back off, coxcomb! Get away from me, fool!”

Dogberry asked, “Where’s the sexton? He should write down that the law-enforcement officer is a coxcomb. Well, let us bind their hands.”

He said to Conrade, “You are resisting arrest.”

Conrade shouted, “Get away from me! You are an ass! An ass!”

Dogberry replied, “Do you not suspect [respect] my job as a law-enforcement officer? Do you not suspect [respect] my age? I wish that the sexton were here so he could write down that I

am an ass! But, people, remember that I am an ass. Although it is not written down, do not forget that I am an ass.”

Dogberry wanted Conrade to be punished for calling him an ass, and so he wanted an official record of the name-calling.

He said to Conrade, “You villain, you are full of piety [impiety], as shall be proved upon you by good witnesses. I am a wise [foolish] fellow, and, which is more, I am a law-enforcement officer, and, which is more, I am the head of a household, and, which is more, I am as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and I am one who knows the law [does not know the law], damn you. And I am a rich enough fellow, damn you; and I am a fellow who has suffered financial losses, and I am one who owns two gowns and has many handsome things around him. Bring him away. Oh, I wish that the sexton had written down that I am an ass!”

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

Leonato and Antonio, his older brother, were on the street in front of Leonato's house.

"If you go on ranting and raging like this, you will kill yourself," Antonio said. "It is not wise to add to your own grief."

"Please, do not give me advice," Leonato replied. "Advice falls on my ears the way that water pours into a sieve. Neither accomplishes anything, so do not give me advice. Let no one try to comfort me except someone who has suffered what I have suffered. Bring me a father who has loved his child as much as I loved Hero. Let his joy in his child be overwhelmed by sorrow like my joy has been, and let him speak to me about patiently enduring my sorrow. Measure that father's sorrow by the length and breadth of my sorrow, and see whether his sorrow equals my sorrow and his grief equals my grief in every way — in every lineament, branch, shape, and form. If it does, then if that father will smile and stroke his beard, tell sorrow to get lost, cry 'Keep going!' instead of groaning, cure grief with proverbs, make misfortune forget itself with advice from scholars who read philosophical books, then bring that father to me. From him I will learn how to patiently endure my sorrow. But no such father exists.

"Antonio, men can give advice and speak comforting words to a man who suffers a grief that they themselves do not feel; but if they themselves feel that same grief, then their advice turns into suffering. When men do not feel grief, then they think that they can conquer rage with precepts and little life lessons. When men do not feel grief, then they think that they can tie up strong madness with a silken thread. When men do not feel grief, then they think that they can charm away aches with mere breath and charm away agony with mere words. So they think.

"All men think that it is their duty to speak about patiently enduring sorrow to those who writhe under a heavy load of sorrow. However, no man has the ability or power to be so moral when he himself is enduring the same heavy load of sorrow. Therefore, do not give me advice. My griefs cry louder than words of advice."

"Men who think and feel as you do cannot be distinguished from children," Antonio replied.

"Be quiet, please," Leonato said. "I will be flesh and blood. No philosopher has ever been able to patiently endure a toothache, even if the philosopher has written in the style of gods who do not suffer as humans do and even if the philosopher has scoffed at bad luck and suffering."

"You are suffering, but you ought not to bear all the suffering by yourself," Antonio said. "Make those men who have offended you suffer, too."

"Now you are speaking intelligently," Leonato said. "I will do that. My soul tells me now that Hero has been slandered, and I intend that Claudio shall know that, as shall Don Pedro and everyone else who thus dishonors her."

Antonio looked up and said, "Here come Don Pedro and Claudio hurrying this way."

Don Pedro and Claudio walked over to Leonato and Antonio.

Don Pedro said, "Good day."

Claudio said, "Good day to both of you."

"We are in a hurry, Leonato," Don Pedro said.

"A hurry!" Leonato said. "Well, fare you well, my lord. Are you so hasty now that my daughter is dead? Don't you want to speak to me?"

He added, sarcastically, "It doesn't matter, I suppose — to you."

Don Pedro said, "Do not quarrel with us, good old man."

Antonio said, "If Leonato could make things right by quarreling, some of the men here would lie low in their graves."

Claudio asked, "Who has done wrong to Leonato?"

"You have wronged me, Claudio," Leonato replied. "You are a liar."

Claudio's hand rested on the hilt of his sword.

Leonato pointed to Claudio's hand and said, "If you want me to be afraid, you will not accomplish that by putting your hand on your sword. I am not afraid."

"Curse my hand if it should give an old man a reason to be afraid," Claudio said. "I swear that I had no intention of drawing my sword."

"Tut, man," Leonato said. "Do not scorn or make jokes about me. I do not speak like a dotard or a fool. I do not brag about what I did when I was young, and I do not brag about what I would do if I were not old. I am telling you to your face, Claudio, that you have so wronged my innocent child and me that I am forced to put aside my old man's respectability and, with the grey hairs and the bruises that result from living so many days, I challenge you to a duel. I say to you that you have lied about my innocent child. Your slander has gone through and through her heart, and she lies buried with her ancestors. She lies in a tomb where never scandal has slept, except this scandal of hers — scandal that is the result of your villainy and lies!"

"My villainy?" Claudio said.

"Your villainy, Claudio," Leonato said. "It is your villainy."

Don Pedro said, "You are wrong, old man."

Leonato replied, "My lord, I will prove the truth of what I say on his body, if he dares to fight me, despite his elegant fencing and his recent battle experience, his youth, and his manliness."

"No," Claudio said. "I will not fight you!"

"Do you think that you can ignore me?" Leonato said. "You have killed my daughter. If you kill me, boy, you shall kill a man."

"He shall kill two of us, and we are men indeed," Antonio said. "But that does not matter. Let Claudio kill one of us first, and then he can boast about it. Win me and wear me: Let him conquer me, and then he can boast. Let Claudio answer my challenge to him."

He said to Claudio, "Come, follow me, boy. Come, Sir Boy, and follow me. Sir Boy, I will whip you despite your fancy fencing. I am a gentleman, and I swear that I will kill you."

Leonato began, "Brother —"

"Be quiet," Antonio said. "God knows that I loved my niece, and she is dead. She was slandered to death by villains who are as eager to fight a man in a duel as I am to pick up a poisonous snake by its tongue. Who are these slanderers? Boys, mimics, braggarts, knaves, milksops!"

"Brother Antonio —"

"Be quiet. What, man! I know these slanderers. I know what kind of men they are. I know what they are made of and what they weigh down to the last gram. They are scuffling, insolent and bullying, fashion-mongering boys. They lie and cheat and insult, and they deprave and slander. They dress and behave like buffoons and look repulsive. They speak half a dozen dangerous words about how they might hurt their enemies if they dared to, and they don't dare to."

"But, brother Antonio —"

"Brother, be quiet. I know what I am doing. Do not meddle in this. Let me deal with it."

Don Pedro said, "Gentlemen, we will not stay here and disturb your peace of mind any longer. I am sorry that your daughter died, but, on my honor, I swear that she was charged with nothing but what was fully proven to be true."

Leonato began, "My lord —"

Don Pedro, who had more power than Leonato, said sharply, "I will not listen to you."

Leonato said, "No? Come, Antonio; let us leave."

Leonato then said to Don Pedro, "I will be heard!"

"And he shall," Antonio said, "or some of us here will hurt because of it."

Leonato and Antonio exited.

Benedick walked toward Don Pedro and Claudio.

Don Pedro said to Claudio, "Look, here comes the man we were looking for."

Claudio said to Benedick, "What's up?"

Benedick ignored Claudio and said to Don Pedro, "Good day, my lord."

"Welcome, Benedick," Don Pedro said. "You have almost come in time to stop what was almost a fight."

Claudio said, "Two old men without teeth wanted to bite off our noses."

"They were Leonato and his brother," Don Pedro said. "What do you think about that? Had we fought, I think that we would have been too young and strong for them."

"An unfair fight has no true valor," Benedick said. "I came looking for both of you."

“We have been everywhere looking for you,” Claudio said. “We are very sad and would like to have our sadness beaten away. Will you use your wit to make us happy?”

“It is in my scabbard,” Benedick said. “Shall I draw it?”

“Do you wear your wit by your side?” Don Pedro said.

“No one wears their wit by their side,” Claudio said, “although some people have been out of their wits. Please draw your wit, just as minstrels draw their bows across their musical instruments, and entertain us.”

“To be honest, Benedick looks pale,” Don Pedro said. “Are you ill, Benedick, or are you angry?”

“Care may have killed the cat,” Claudio said, “but you are strong enough to kill care.”

“Sir, I shall defeat you in a battle of wits even if you charge against me at full gallop,” Benedick said. “Please choose a subject to talk about other than wit.”

“You need another lance to joust with,” Claudio said. “Your lance has been broken across the middle. You have not directly hit your opponent.”

“Benedick is growing paler and paler,” Don Pedro said. “I think that he is indeed angry.”

“If he is, he knows what he can do about it,” Claudio said. “His anger is his problem.”

“Can I talk to you privately?” Benedick asked Claudio.

“God forbid that you want to challenge me to a duel!” Claudio said.

Benedick said quietly to Claudio, “You are a villain. I am not joking, and I will prove in a duel that you are a villain. I challenge you however you like. We can use whatever weapons you like, and we will duel whenever you like. Accept my challenge, or I will make it known that you are a coward. You have killed a sweet lady, and you shall pay for her death. What is your answer to my challenge?”

“I accept your challenge,” Claudio said, “and I plan to enjoy myself.”

Don Pedro did not quite hear what Benedick and Claudio had said.

Don Pedro said, “Enjoy yourself? At what? A feast?”

Claudio said, “Benedick has invited me to a feast of a calf’s head and a capon: a castrated cock. I have every intention of carving the capon — if I don’t carve it, say that my knife is worthless. I think that I will see a woodcock at the feast, too.”

Claudio thought, *Calves, capons, and woodcocks are all notorious for their stupidity.*

Benedick replied, “Sir, your wit ambles; it goes very slowly.”

Don Pedro said, “Let me tell you how Beatrice praised your wit the other day, Benedick.

“I said that you had a fine wit.

“Beatrice said, ‘True, a fine little wit.’

“‘No,’ I said. ‘He has a great wit.’

“‘Right,’ Beatrice said. ‘A great big coarse wit.’

“‘No,’ I said. ‘A good wit.’

“‘That is exactly right,’ Beatrice said. ‘It is so weak that it hurts nobody.’

“‘No,’ I said. ‘The gentleman is wise.’

“‘That is certain,’ Beatrice said. ‘He is a wiseass.’

“‘No,’ I said. ‘He can speak in foreign tongues.’

“‘I can believe that,’ Beatrice said. ‘Benedick swore one thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning. He has a double tongue; he has two tongues.’

“For an entire hour, she criticized you and turned all your virtues into vices, yet at last she concluded, with a sigh, that you are the handsomest man in Italy.”

“And then she cried a lot and said that she did not care,” Claudio said.

“Yes, she did,” Don Pedro said, “but yet, for all that, she said that if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. Hero, the old man’s daughter, told us all this.”

“She did say all this,” Claudio said, “and God saw Benedick when he was hiding in the garden the way that he saw Adam after Adam had hidden himself after sinning.”

“When shall we set the savage bull’s horns on the sensible Benedick’s head?” Don Pedro asked.

“Yes, and when shall we put a sign on him that says, ‘Here is Benedick the married man?’” Claudio said.

Don Pedro and Claudio were making inappropriate jokes about an angry man. They were now angry at Benedick, whom they had recently considered to be their friend.

Benedick said to Claudio, “Fare you well, boy. You know what I think about you. I will leave you now to your old woman’s chattering: You break jests as braggarts do their blades, which God be thanked, hurt not. Braggarts will hack their own swords in private, and then say in public that their swords were damaged in battle.”

Benedick said to Don Pedro, “My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you, but I must discontinue your company and leave your service. Your brother Don John the bastard has fled from Messina. You, Claudio, and Don John have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. As for my Lord Lackbeard — Claudio — there, he and I shall meet in a duel, and until then, peace be with him.”

Benedick left the two men, his former friends.

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “He is in earnest. He wants to fight you.”

“He is in most profound earnest, and, I promise you, he wants to fight me because he loves Beatrice.”

“And he has challenged you,” Don Pedro said.

“Most sincerely.”

“What a pretty thing a man is when he goes about in his jacket and pants, but wears no cloak so that he can duel, and leaves behind at home his intelligence!” Don Pedro said.

“A man who makes a challenge seems to be a hero to a fool, but actually the fool is the wiser man,” Claudio said.

“But wait a minute,” Don Pedro said. “Let me be serious. Didn’t Benedick say that Don John, my bastard brother, has fled? He must have fled for a reason that is sure to be bad news for me.”

Dogberry, Verges, and the watchmen arrived. With them were Borachio and Conrade — the prisoners’ hands were bound.

Dogberry said to Borachio, “Come along. If justice cannot tame and punish you, she shall never weigh more reasons in her balance. You have been a cursing hypocrite at least once, and you must be dealt with.”

“What is going on?” Don Pedro said. “Two of my brother’s men have been bound by this city’s law-enforcement officers. Borachio is one of my brother’s men who have been bound.”

“Ask what is their offense, my lord,” Claudio said.

“Officers, what offence have these men done?” Don Pedro asked.

Dogberry answered, “Indeed, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanderers; sixth and lastly, they have lied about a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.”

Amused by Dogberry’s answer, Don Pedro replied, “First, I ask you what they have done; thirdly, I ask you what is their offence; sixth and lastly, I ask you why they are committed; and, to conclude, I ask you what you lay to their charge.”

“That is a good reply, and it is in his own style,” Claudio said to Don Pedro. “Truly, he has said one thing in six different ways.”

Don Pedro asked the prisoners, “Who have you offended, masters, that your hands are thus bound and you must answer to these law-enforcement officers? This learned constable is too cunning for me to understand. What is your offence?”

Borachio had repented his sin. He had been willing to be somewhat evil, but he had not intended to help cause the death of a lady. That was too evil for him.

Borachio said to Don Pedro, “Sweet Prince, let me answer you immediately. Hear my confession, and then let Count Claudio kill me. I have deceived your own eyes. What wise men could not uncover, these shallow fools have brought to light. The watchmen during the night overheard me confessing to this man, Conrade, how Don John your brother instigated me to slander the Lady Hero. They overheard me tell how you were brought to Leonato’s garden and saw me court Margaret, who was wearing some of Hero’s clothing. Count Claudio disgraced Hero when he was supposed to marry her. My confession of my villainy they have upon record. I would rather pay for my villainy with my death than recount again what I have done. The lady Hero is dead because of the false accusation of unchasteness that Don John and

I have engineered, and to be short, I want nothing but the reward of a villain — I want to be justly punished for my crime.”

“Doesn’t this speech make your blood run cold?” Don Pedro said to Claudio.

“This speech is like poison to me,” Claudio said.

“Did Don John tempt you to do all this?” Don Pedro asked Borachio.

“Yes, and he paid me richly for doing it.”

“Don John delights in treachery,” Don Pedro said, “and he has fled to escape being punished for this villainy.”

“Sweet Hero!” Claudio said. “Now when I think of you, I remember you the way you appeared when I first loved you.”

Dogberry said, “Come, bring away the plaintiffs [defendants]. By this time, the sexton has reformed [informed] Signior Leonato about what we have learned, and, masters, do not forget to specify, when you have time and are in the right place, that I am an ass.”

Verges said, “Here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton, too.”

Leonato, Antonio, and the sexton walked over to the others.

Leonato said, “Which man is the villain? Let me see his eyes so that, when I see another man like him, I may avoid him. Which of these men is he?”

“If you want to see the man who wronged you,” Borachio said, “look at me.”

“Are you the slave and scoundrel who with your lying breath has killed my innocent child?”

“Yes, I alone did that,” Borachio said.

“That is not true, villain,” Leonato replied. “You did not kill my daughter by yourself. Here stand a pair of ‘honorable’ men who helped kill my daughter. A third guilty man has fled.”

He said sarcastically to Don Pedro and Claudio, “I thank you, sirs, for my daughter’s death. Record it with your other high and worthy deeds. It was brave of you to do so; think well of yourselves when you think of your deed.”

When someone does wrong, even unintentionally, it is often best to admit the fact and accept the punishment.

Claudio said to Leonato, “I do not know how to ask for your forgiveness, yet I must speak up and ask for it. Choose your revenge yourself; impose on me whatever penance you think is suitable to punish my sin, although I sinned not on purpose but by mistake.”

Don Pedro said, “I also sinned by mistake. And yet, to satisfy this good old man, Leonato, I am willing to bend under any heavy weight that he wishes to place on me.”

“I cannot order you to make my daughter live again,” Leonato said. “That is impossible, but I ask you both to inform the people in Messina here that she was innocent and a virgin when she died. Claudio, if your love can labor in creation despite your sadness, then write an epitaph for Hero and hang it on a wall in her tomb and sing it to her bones. Sing it tonight, and tomorrow

morning come to my house. Because Hero is dead, you cannot be my son-in-law, but you can yet be my nephew. My brother has a daughter who is almost the twin — almost an exact copy — of my daughter who is dead. My brother's daughter is the sole heir to both of us. Marry my brother's daughter, and that will end the enmity between us."

"Oh, noble sir, your great kindness wrings tears from me! I embrace your offer, and I put my future in your hands."

"I will expect you to come to my house tomorrow morning to be married," Leonato said. "For tonight I take my leave of you. This wicked man shall be brought face to face with Margaret, whom I believe was part of this evil plot and bribed to participate in it by Don John."

"I swear on my soul that Margaret is innocent," Borachio said. "She did not know about the plot when I spoke to her outside Hero's bedroom window. Margaret has always been just and virtuous in everything."

Dogberry said, "Moreover, sir, here is something that has not been written down in white and black. This plaintiff [defendant] here, the offender, did call me an ass. I ask you to let that be remembered in his punishment. Also, the watchmen heard these men talk about a man named De Formed. They said that he wears a key in his ear and has a lock hanging by it, and he borrows money in God's name, something that he has done for so long and never paid the money back that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God's sake. Please, examine De Formed about that charge."

"I thank you for your care and honest pains," Leonato replied.

"Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth [old man], and I praise God for you," Dogberry replied.

Handing Dogberry some money, Leonato said, "Here is something for your good work."

"God save the foundation!" Dogberry said, using a sentence spoken by professional beggars.

"You may go now," Leonato said. "I will take care of your prisoners. Thank you."

"I leave an arrant knave with your worship," Dogberry said, "and I beg your worship to correct yourself [punish Borachio] to serve as an example to others. God keep your worship! I wish your worship well! God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart [I will now humbly depart]; and if a merry meeting may be wished, may God prohibit [permit] it! Let's go, Verges."

Dogberry and Verges exited.

Leonato said to Don Pedro and Count Claudio, "Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell."

"As we promised, we will see you tomorrow morning," Don Pedro said.

"Tonight I will go to Hero's tomb to mourn her," Claudio said.

Leonato said to the watchmen, "Bring the prisoners. We will talk to Margaret and find out how she became acquainted with this scoundrel."

In Leonato's garden, Benedick and Margaret talked.

"Please, sweet Mistress Margaret, earn my thanks by asking Beatrice to come and talk to me."

"If I do, will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?"

"Yes," Benedick said. "I will write it in so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall exceed its eloquence. It will be like a high stile that no man can climb and come over it. Truly, Margaret, you deserve it."

"I deserve to have no man come over me!" Margaret said. "In that case, I will always sleep downstairs in the servants' quarters. I will never have a husband who will be over me in our bed in our own household and cum."

"Your wit is as quick as a greyhound's mouth; it catches everything and makes a joke out of it."

"Your wit is as blunt as a fencer's foils, which hit, but do not hurt."

"I have a very manly wit, Margaret," Benedick said. "It will not hurt a woman, and so please ask Beatrice to come and talk to me. I give up in this battle of wits. To show that I give up, I will give you my fencing buckler — my small, round shield."

"Give us women swords," Margaret said. "We have bucklers to press against your swords."

Benedick was familiar with Margaret's bawdy sense of humor. When conversing with Margaret, Benedick understood that swords are phalluses and that bucklers are women's crotches.

Benedick said, "Margaret, each buckler has a hole in which a pike is inserted — it is screwed in. Screwing is a dangerous pastime for virgins."

"I will ask Beatrice to come to you," Margaret said. "I think that she has legs."

"And because she has legs, she will come," Benedick said, thinking, *I am sure that Margaret will think that I said, "And because she has legs, she will cum."*

Margaret exited.

Benedick began to sing to himself a song about a sad lover hoping for attention from the woman he loved:

*"The god of love,*

*"Who sits above,*

*"And knows me, and knows me,*

*"How pitiful I deserve —*

"I am a poor singer, but I am a good lover. Leander was a good swimmer who swam across the Hellespont to see the woman he loved. Troilus was the first employer of panders to help him to see the woman he loved. These two men and a whole book full of these old-time ladies' men who were familiar with the carpeted floor of women's quarters, all of whose names fit smoothly in the even sound of a poem of blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned

topsy-turvy in love as I am. But although that is true, I cannot show my love in rhyme, although I have tried. I can find no rhyme for 'lady' but 'baby.' That is an innocent and silly rhyme for an innocent and silly baby. I can find no rhyme for 'scorn' but 'horn.' That is a hard rhyme for a hard horn. I can find no rhyme for 'school' but 'fool.' That is a babbling rhyme. These are very ominous words to put at the end of lines of poetry: baby ... horn ... fool. They would fit, however, for a poem about a foolish cuckold whose wife gives birth to another man's baby. Well, I was not born under a rhyming planet and so I receive no help from astrology. I am no poet, and I cannot woo a lady with flowery language."

Beatrice appeared, and Benedick said to her, "Sweet Beatrice, have you come because I asked Margaret to ask you to come? If so, I am delighted."

"Yes, I have come because you bid me to come, and I will leave when you bid me to leave, but the word 'bid' also means order, and I will leave if you begin to order me around."

"Please stay until then!"

"Until ... then? You have said the word 'then,' and so I should say 'fare you well' and leave," Beatrice said. "However, before I go, tell me what I came here to learn: What has happened between you and Claudio?"

"So far, we have only exchanged foul words, and with that I will kiss you."

"Is that all? Foul words are only foul wind, and foul wind is only foul breath, and foul breath stinks. You have had foul words in your mouth, and so your breath must stink; therefore, I will depart unknissed."

"Your wit is strong — so strong that it can frighten my words and so change their meaning," Benedick said. "But I must tell you plainly that I have challenged Claudio. Either I will shortly hear from him about where and when we shall fight, or I will announce publicly that he is a coward. But now let me ask you, please, this question: Because of which of my bad character traits did you first fall in love with me?"

"I fell in love with you because of all of your bad character traits," Beatrice said. "Your bad character traits are so well maintained in a state of evil that they will not admit any good character traits to intermingle with them. But now let me ask you, please, this question: Because of which of my good character traits did you first fall in love with me? For which one did you first suffer love for me?"

"'Suffer love!' That is a good expression!" Benedick said. "I do suffer love indeed, because I love you against my will."

"You love me in spite of your heart," Beatrice said. "Alas, poor heart! If you spite your poor heart for my sake, I will spite it for yours; I will never love that which my friend hates."

"You and I are too wise and witty to woo peacefully."

"Your words cannot be correct," Beatrice said. "You say that you are wise, but not one wise man out of twenty will praise himself by saying that he is wise."

"The proverb 'A wise man will not praise himself' is very old, Beatrice. It comes from the good old days when neighbors spoke well of other people. These days are different. These

days, if a man does not erect his own tomb before he dies, he shall live no longer in memory than the time it takes the bell to ring and the widow to weep.”

“And how long is that, do you think?”

“That is an interesting question,” Benedick said. “The funeral bell will ring for an hour, and the widow will weep for fifteen minutes. Therefore, it is most expedient for a wise man, if his conscience, which can be like a gnawing worm, finds no reason against it, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. But that is enough of my praising myself, although I myself bear witness that I am praiseworthy. Now tell me, how is Hero, your cousin?”

“She is very ill.”

“And how are you?”

“Very ill, too.”

“Serve God, love me, and get better,” Benedick said. “Now I should leave you because I see someone running here.”

Ursula ran up to Beatrice and said, “Madam, you must go to your uncle. All kinds of exciting things are going on at home. It has been proven that my Lady Hero has been falsely accused of being unchaste, Don Pedro and Claudio have been greatly deceived, and Don John, who has fled, is the instigator of all this evil. Will you go home immediately?”

“Will you go with us to hear this news, Benedick?” Beatrice asked.

“I will live in your heart, die in your lap from an orgasm, and be buried in your eyes when I see reflected in them my O face,” Benedick said, “and moreover I will go with you to your uncle’s home.”

They went inside Leonato’s house.

### — 5.3 —

That night, Don Pedro, Claudio, some musicians, and a few attendants carrying burning torches entered the tomb in which they thought Hero was buried.

Claudio asked, “Is this the tomb of the family of Leonato?”

An attendant replied, “It is, my lord.”

Claudio began to read a scroll that contained a poem that he had written about Hero:

*“Done to death by slanderous tongues*

*“Was the Hero who here lies:*

*“Death, in recompense of her wrongs,*

*“Gives her fame that never dies.*

*“So the life that died with shame*

*“Lives in death with glorious fame.”*

Claudio hung the scroll containing the poem on a wall of the tomb and said, “Hang here in the tomb and praise Hero when I am silent. Now, music, play, and let us sing a solemn hymn.”

Music started, and the mourners sang this song as they circled clockwise what they thought was Hero’s resting place:

*“Pardon, Diana, goddess of the night,*

*“Those who slew Hero, your virgin knight;*

*“For which, with songs of woe,*

*“Round about her tomb they go.*

*“Midnight, assist our moan;*

*“Help us to sigh and groan,*

*“Heavily, heavily:*

*“Graves, yawn and yield your dead,*

*“Until all the dead have exited,*

*“Heavily, heavily.”*

Claudio said to the resting place that he thought was Hero’s, “Now to your bones I say good night! Yearly I will do this rite.”

Don Pedro said, “Good morrow, masters; put out your torches. The wolves have hunted all night — look, the gentle day, brought to us by the wheels of Phoebus Apollo’s Sun-chariot, dapples the drowsy East with spots of grey. Thanks to you all, and leave us. Fare you well.”

Claudio said goodbye to the other mourners: “Good morning, masters. Each of you must go his separate way.”

“Come, Claudio, let us leave us here,” Don Pedro said. “We need to change out of our mourning clothing and put on clothing suitable for a wedding. Then we will go to Leonato’s house.”

“May Hymen, the god of marriage, now give us a luckier result than this one for which we have this night mourned.”

— 5.4 —

Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, Friar Francis, and Hero were together in a room in Leonato’s house.

Friar Francis said, “Didn’t I tell you that Hero was innocent?”

“Yes, you did,” Leonato admitted. “Don Pedro and Claudio are also innocent, although they mistakenly accused Hero of not being a virgin. But Margaret bears some little fault for all this, although her fault was unintentional, as we have learned from our investigation.”

Antonio said, “I am glad that things have turned out so well.”

“And so am I,” Benedick said, “or else I would have to fight Claudio in a duel, as I promised Beatrice I would do.”

Leonato said, “Well, daughter, and all of you gentlewomen, go into a room by yourselves, and when I send for you, come here wearing masks.”

Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula left the room.

Leonato said, “Don Pedro and Claudio promised to visit me right about now. You know what to do, brother Antonio. You must pretend to be the father of your brother’s daughter, Hero, and give her to young Claudio.”

“I will do so with a straight face,” Antonio said.

Benedick said, “Friar Francis, I must ask for your help.”

“To do what, Signior Benedick?”

“To bind me, or to undo me: one of them,” Benedick said. “Either I will be married today to the woman I love, or I will be undone in the sense of being ruined, although I hope to be undone — released — from my pose of being a misogynist.”

He then said, “Good Signior Leonato, it is true that Beatrice, your niece, regards me with an eye of favor. She loves me.”

“My daughter, Hero, lent her that eye,” Leonato said, thinking of how Hero and Margaret had tricked Beatrice into believing that Benedick loved her.

“And I do with an eye of love requite her,” Benedick said. “I love her.”

“And you received your eye from me, Don Pedro, and Claudio,” Leonato said, thinking of how the three men, including himself, had tricked Benedick into believing that Beatrice loved him. “But what do you want?”

Benedick, who was puzzled by Leonato’s comments about eyes, said, “Your answers to me, sir, are enigmatic. But what my will wants is your good will. I want to stand with Beatrice beside me today as we are joined in marriage. And, good friar, I need you to perform that marriage.”

“I like what you want,” Leonato said. “I give you my blessing. You may marry Beatrice.”

“And you will receive my help,” Friar Francis said. “I will perform the wedding.”

He added, “Here come Don Pedro and Count Claudio.”

A few people accompanied Don Pedro and Claudio.

Don Pedro said, “Good morning to all in this fair assembly.”

“Good morning, Don Pedro,” Leonato said. “Good morning, Claudio. We have been waiting for you. Claudio, are you still resolved to marry my brother’s daughter today?”

“I am still resolved,” Claudio said. “I will marry her even if she is darkly suntanned like a peasant woman.”

Leonato said, “Bring her here, brother Antonio. The friar is ready to perform the wedding.”

Antonio left to get Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula.

Don Pedro looked at Benedick, who was a little worried about being teased by Don Pedro and Claudio when they discovered that he would marry Beatrice.

Don Pedro said to Benedick, with whom he wanted to be again on good — and joking — terms, “Good morning, Benedick. Why, what is the matter? You have a February face that is full of frost, storm, and cloudiness.”

Benedick was worried — he had not actually asked Beatrice to marry him. If she rejected his proposal in public ...

Claudio, who also wanted to be again on good — and joking — terms with Benedick, said, “I think that Benedick is thinking about the savage bull that was tamed to bear the yoke. Tut, fear not, Benedick. If you are ever tamed, we will tip your horns with gold to glorify your cuckoldry. All of Europe shall rejoice, like Europa once rejoiced when the lusty god Jupiter turned himself into a bull and carried her away to make love to her.”

Worried about whether Beatrice would accept his proposal of marriage, Benedick replied, “When Jupiter was a bull, he had an amiable lowing sound. Another strange bull jumped on your father’s cow, and made a calf in that same noble deed that Jupiter performed on Europa. That calf was very similar to you — you have that calf’s bleat.”

Claudio joked, “I’ll get you for that insult, but later. Right now, I have something else I need to do.”

Antonio returned. With him were Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula, all of whom were wearing masks.

Claudio asked, “Which lady shall be mine?”

Antonio took Hero by the hand and led her to Claudio, saying, “This lady is she, and I do give her to you.”

“Why, then she is mine,” Claudio said. “Sweet lady, let me see your face.”

“No, you shall not,” Leonato said, “not until you take her hand before this friar and swear to marry her.”

Claudio said to the masked Hero, whom he did not recognize, “Give me your hand. Before this holy friar, I swear that I will be your husband, if you are willing to take me.”

Hero replied, “When I lived, I was your other wife.”

She took off her mask and said, “And when you loved me, you were my other husband.”

Claudio was amazed: “Another Hero!”

“Nothing is more certain than that I am Hero,” she replied. “One Hero died, defiled and slandered, but I live, and as surely as I live, I am a virgin.”

“This is the former Hero!” Don Pedro said, “This is the Hero who was dead!”

“Hero died, my lord, only while her slander lived,” Leonato said. “This is the one and only Hero.”

“All this amazement I can explain,” Friar Francis said, “after the holy rites of marriage are over. Then I will tell you in detail of beautiful Hero’s ‘death.’ In the meantime, ignore your wonder, and let us go immediately to the chapel.”

“Just a minute, Friar Francis,” Benedick said. “Which masked lady is Beatrice?”

Beatrice took off her mask and said, “I answer to that name. What do you want?”

“Do you love me?” Benedick asked.

Declaring one’s love in private is much easier than declaring one’s love in public, especially when you are surrounded by friends who will laugh at you because you have so often spoken against love and marriage. Besides, the guy is supposed to be the first one to say that he is in love — and the first one to say that he will take someone as a spouse.

Beatrice replied, “Why, no — no more than is reasonable.”

“Why, then your uncle and Don Pedro and Claudio have been deceived; they swore you loved me,” Benedick said.

Beatrice asked, “Do you love me?”

“Indeed, I love you — no more than is reasonable,” Benedick said.

“Why, then Hero, Margaret, and Ursula have been deceived; they swore you loved me,” Beatrice said.

“Leonato and Don Pedro and Claudio swore that you were almost sick because you loved me so much.”

“Hero and Margaret and Ursula swore that you were almost dead because you loved me so much.”

“They were mistaken,” Benedick said. “Then you do not love me?”

Beatrice said, “No, truly, but I love you as a friend.”

The two lovers needed help.

Leonato said, “Come, Beatrice, I am sure that you love Benedick.”

Claudio said, “I swear that Benedick loves Beatrice. I have in my hand a piece of paper on which he has written a poem of his own invention. It is a badly written love poem, and in it he says that he loves Beatrice.”

Hero said, “And I have in my hand a piece of paper that I have stolen from Beatrice’s pocket. I recognize her writing, and in this letter she says that she loves Benedick.”

Benedick said, “We needed a miracle, and we have received one. Here is evidence from our hands that reveal what is our hearts. Beatrice, I will take you for my wife, but —” he smiled, then joked, “I want everyone to know that I am marrying you because I pity you for loving me so much.”

Beatrice replied, “I accept your offer of marriage, but —” she smiled, then joked, “I want everyone to know that I am marrying you only after quite a lot of persuasion and in part

because I want to save your life, for I was told that you were dying because of your love for me.”

“Be silent!” Benedick said. “I will stop your mouth.”

They kissed.

“How is Benedick the soon-to-be-married man doing?” Don Pedro asked.

“I will tell you what, Don Pedro,” Benedick replied, relieved that his proposal of marriage had been accepted. “An entire company of jokers cannot mock me out of my happy state of mind. Do you think that I worry about being mocked in a satire or an epigram? No. If a man worries about being beaten by brains, he will do nothing that would make him a target, such as wearing fancy clothing. In brief, since I do intend to marry — today, in fact — I will think nothing about whatever the world can say against me. Don’t bother to mock me because of what I have said against marriage. Mankind is a giddy and inconstant thing, and this is the way that I have changed, and I like it.”

He added, “Claudio, I would have defeated you in our duel, but since we are going to be related by our marriages, I will let you live unbruised so that you can love one of my new family members: Hero.”

“I wish that you would have refused to marry Beatrice,” Claudio said. “That way, I could have beaten you and forced you to marry her. Then you could be a double-dealer — an unfaithful husband. Come to think of it, you are likely to be a double-dealer unless Beatrice keeps a close eye on you.”

“Come, come, we are friends,” Benedick said. “Let us dance before we are married, so that we may lighten our own hearts — and our wives’ heels.”

Leonato said, “Light heels! Have the wedding first, and then you can do your dancing in bed afterwards with your wives’ heels high in the air.”

“We will do that kind of dancing later, just as you wish,” Benedick said. “But now let us have a public kind of dancing. Therefore, musicians, play music. Don Pedro, you seem sad. Get yourself a wife; get yourself a wife. No staff is more honorable than one tipped with horn.”

A messenger entered the room and said to Don Pedro, “My lord, your brother, Don John, has been captured as he fled. Armed men are bringing him back to Messina.”

“Don’t worry about Don John until tomorrow,” Benedick said to Don Pedro. “I will think up some suitable and notable punishments for him.”

He shouted, “Strike up some music, pipers.”

Everyone danced.

## ***CHAPTER X: The Taming of the Shrew***

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

A Lord.

CHRISTOPHER SLY, a Tinker.

Other persons in the Introduction: Hostess, Page, Players, Huntsmen, and Servants.

BAPTISTA, a rich Gentleman of Padua.

VINCENTIO, an old Gentleman of Pisa.

LUCENTIO, son to Vincentio; in love with Bianca. Lucentio pretends to be a tutor named Cambio.

PETRUCHIO, a Gentleman of Verona; Suitor to Katharina.

GREMIO, HORTENSIO, Suitors to Bianca. Hortensio pretends to be a tutor named Litio.

TRANIO, BIONDELLO, Servants to Lucentio. Tranio pretends to be Lucentio.

GRUMIO, CURTIS, Servants to Petruchio.

PEDANT, an old man, set up to impersonate Vincentio.

KATHARINA, the Shrew, and BIANCA, Daughters to Baptista.

Widow.

Tailor, Haberdasher, and Servants attending on Baptista and Petruchio.

**SCENE:** Padua, Italy, and Petruchio's country house.

### ***INTRODUCTION***

## Part 1

Tinkers — repairers of pots and pans — have a reputation for drinking way too much, and Christopher Sly lived up to that reputation. Right now, he was drunk and being thrown out of an alehouse because he had broken so many glasses. The arguing between Christopher Sly and the hostess of the inn had carried them a little distance from the alehouse. They were now on a heath that belonged to a Lord — they were near the Lord's house.

"I'll get even with you," Christopher Sly threatened the hostess of the inn.

"And I'll get a pair of stocks for you," the hostess threatened back.

A pair of stocks was used to punish criminals. Their feet would be put in holes in wooden beams. Once their feet were secured, the criminals could not run away. If a crowd of people were angry at the criminal, they would torment the criminal.

"You are a baggage — a loose and good-for-nothing woman," Christopher Sly replied. "The Slys are no rogues; look in the historical chronicles; we came in with Richard the Conqueror."

The Hostess thought, *He means William the Conqueror, but since he got the name wrong, he is probably lying about his family's historical importance.*

Christopher Sly continued, "Therefore *paucas pallabris* — I know my Spanish for 'few words' — let the world pass. *Sessa!* — I know my Spanish for 'cease!' 'scram!' and 'shut up!'"

"You will not pay for the glasses you have broken?" the hostess asked him.

"No, not a denier — not a penny. Here's a quotation from Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*: 'Go by, Jeronimy.' Beware, Jeronimy."

The Hostess thought, *It is an inaccurate quote. The character's name in the play is Hieronimo, but this drunken tinker has mixed it up with Saint Jerome, aka Hieronymus.*

Christopher Sly added an insult for the Hostess, "Go to your cold bed, and do something that will warm you."

"I know the remedy for my problem," the Hostess said. "I must go and fetch the third borough — the constable."

The Hostess left to fetch a constable.

"The third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I'll answer him according to the law," Christopher Sly said. "I'll not budge an inch, wretch. Let him come, and welcome."

A hunting horn soon sounded, and a Lord and his men came over to Christopher Sly, who had fallen asleep.

The Lord said, "Huntsman, I order you to take good care of my hounds. Let Merriman breathe and recover his breath; the poor hunting dog is foaming at the mouth. And couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed bitch. Did you see how Silver picked up the scent at the corner of the hedge when it was faintest? I would not lose the dog for twenty pounds."

The first huntsman said, "Why, Bellman is as good as he, my Lord. He discovered the scent and cried out twice when it seemed completely lost. Trust me, I take him for the better dog."

“You are a fool,” the Lord said. “If Echo were as fast, I would esteem him worth a dozen dogs such as Bellman. But feed them well and look after them all. Tomorrow I intend to hunt again.”

“I will, my Lord.”

Seeing Christopher Sly, the Lord said, “Who is here? One dead, or drunk? Look and see whether he breathes.”

The second huntsman said, “He breathes, my Lord. Were he not warmed with ale, this would be a cold bed in which to sleep so soundly.”

“Oh, monstrous beast! How like a swine he lies!” the Lord said. “Grim death, how foul and loathsome is your image! Sleep is the counterfeit of death. Sirs, I will play a joke on this drunken man. What do you think — if he were carried to a bed and wrapped in fine and scented clothes, rings put upon his fingers, a most delicious light meal placed by his bed, and finely dressed attendants located near him when he wakes, wouldn’t the beggar then forget who he is? Wouldn’t he think that he is a Lord and not a beggar?”

“Believe me, Lord,” the first huntsman said. “I think he could not believe anything other than that he is a Lord.”

“Everything would seem strange to him when he awoke,” the second huntsman said.

“It would seem to him like a flattering dream or flight of imagination,” the Lord said. “Pick him up and carry out the jest well. Carry him gently to my best bedchamber and hang in it all my tapestries depicting amorous scenes. Bathe his foul head in warm rosewater made from distilled rose petals, and burn sweet wood such as juniper or pinecones to make the lodging smell good. Make sure that music is ready to play when he wakes — let the music make a melodious and a Heavenly sound. If he happens to speak, be ready to immediately and with a low submissive bow say, ‘What is it your honor will command?’ Let a servant attend him with a silver basin full of rosewater and bestrewed with flowers. Let another servant bear a ewer — a large jug with a wide mouth. Let yet another servant bring a towel and say, ‘Will it please your Lordship to cool your hands?’ Let a servant be ready with an expensive suit of clothing and ask him what apparel he will wear. Another servant will tell him of his hounds and horses, and that his lady mourns because of his disease. Persuade him that he has been insane, and when he says he is out of his mind now, say that he is mistaken, for he is in fact a mighty Lord. Do these things and do them convincingly, gentle sirs. It will be an extremely excellent practical joke if we do things properly and without overdoing them.”

“My Lord, I promise you that we will play our parts well,” the first huntsman said, “and because we will skillfully and diligently play our parts he shall think he is no less than what we tell him he is: a Lord.”

“Pick him up gently and take him to bed,” the Lord said. “Each one be ready to perform his part when he wakes up.”

Some huntsmen carried out Christopher Sly as a trumpet sounded.

The Lord said to a servant, “Go and see what trumpet it is that sounds.”

A servant exited to carry out the order.

The Lord said, "Probably, the trumpet announces that some traveling noble gentleman intends to stay here tonight."

The servant came back, and the Lord asked, "Who is it?"

"Sir, it is a group of actors who are offering their services to your Lordship. If you are willing, they will perform a play for you."

"Tell them to come here."

The actors came over to the Lord, who said to them, "Fellows, you are welcome here."

"Thank you," the actors replied.

"Do you intend to lodge with me tonight?"

"If it pleases your Lordship," an actor replied.

"It does, with all my heart," the Lord said.

He looked at an actor and said, "This fellow I remember. I once saw him play a farmer's eldest son. It was where you wooed the gentlewoman so well. I have forgotten the name of the character, but I remember that you were well suited for that part and performed it well and realistically."

The player replied, "I think it was the role of Soto that your honor means."

"Yes, that was it," the Lord said. "You performed the role excellently."

The Lord said to all the actors, "Well, you have come to me at a good time because I require some entertainment and your talents can assist me much. A Lord will hear your play tonight. But you must be capable of self-control. This Lord has never seen a play and he may behave oddly. I am afraid that if you pay too much attention to his odd behavior that you will begin to laugh at him and thereby offend him. I must tell you that if you even smile at him he will grow irritable."

An actor replied, "Fear not, my Lord. We can control ourselves even if he is the most eccentric and oddest man in the world."

The Lord ordered a servant, "Take these actors to the buttery — the liquor pantry — and give all of them a friendly welcome. Let them lack nothing that my house can offer."

The servant and the actors exited.

The Lord ordered another servant, "You go to Bartholomew, my young page, and tell him to dress himself up like a lady. Once that is done, take him to the drunkard's bedchamber, and call Bartholomew 'madam' and pay him respect. Tell him from me that if he wants to earn my gratitude, he will behave in a dignified manner such as he has observed that noble ladies behave toward their husbands. Let him pretend to be the drunkard's wife and act that way toward him. Let Bartholomew speak softly to the drunkard with humble courtesy and say, 'What is it your honor will command, wherein your lady and your humble wife may show her duty to you and make known her love for you?' And then with kind hugs, tempting kisses, and with her — that is, his — head lying on the drunkard's chest, tell Bartholomew to shed tears, overjoyed to see her noble Lord restored to health, who for the past seven years has thought

himself to be no better than a poor and loathsome beggar. If the boy Bartholomew does not have not a woman's gift to rain a shower of tears at will, an onion will do well to cause such tears. An onion in a handkerchief being secretly conveyed to his eyes will make his eyes water and overflow with tears. See that this is done as quickly as you can. Soon I will give you more instructions."

The servant exited.

The Lord said to himself, "I know the boy Bartholomew will well assume the grace, voice, walk, and bodily movement of a gentlewoman. I long to hear him call the drunkard 'husband.' I long to see how my men will stop themselves from laughing when they show respect to this simple peasant. I will go inside to give them their instructions. Perhaps my presence will dampen their over-merry spirits that could easily grow into extremes."

## Part 2

Christopher Sly was lying on a bed in the Lord's bedchamber. Around him were many servants. Some servants held fine clothing. Other servants held such items as a basin and a ewer. The Lord was also present.

Christopher Sly yelled, "For God's sake, bring me a pot of small — weak and diluted — ale."

The first servant asked, "Will it please your Lordship to drink a cup of imported sack?"

The second servant asked, "Will it please your Honor to taste this fruit preserved in sugar?"

The third servant asked, "What clothing will your Honor wear today?"

"I am Christophero Sly," he responded, using a Spanish version of his name. "Do not call me 'Honor' or 'Lordship.' I have never drunk sack in my life — imported wine is too expensive for the likes of me and if you give me anything preserved in something else, then give me beef preserved in salt. Never ask me what clothing I will wear; for I have no more jackets than I have backs, no more stockings than I have legs, and no more shoes than I have feet. In fact, sometimes I have more feet than I have shoes, and sometimes when I do have shoes, my toes can be seen even when I am wearing the shoes."

The Lord said, "May Heaven stop this foolish, absurd mood of yours! It is a pity that a mighty man of such descent, with such great possessions and held in so high esteem, should be infected with so foul an illness!"

"What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, which is near Stratford-upon-Avon, by birth a peddler, by education a cardmaker who makes combs for working with wool? Have I not had a job as a keeper of a trained bear, and am I not now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat wife of a keeper of an alehouse in Wincot, which is also near Stratford-upon-Avon, about me — ask her whether she knows me. If she does not say that I owe her fourteen pence on my tab just for ale, call me the lyingest knave in Christendom. Listen to me! I am not out of my mind. Here's —"

The third servant interrupted, "This is what makes your wife mourn!"

The second servant said, "This is what makes your servants hang their heads and feel sorrow for you!"

The Lord said, “This is why your relatives shun your house — it is as if your strange lunacy beats them away from your door. Oh, noble Lord, remember your birth. Call your former reason and original sanity home from banishment and banish from yourself these abject lowly dreams. Look how your servants serve you — each servant is ready to do your bidding. Do you want to hear music? Listen. Apollo, the god of music, plays for you.”

Music began to play.

The Lord continued, “And twenty caged nightingales sing for you. Or do you prefer to sleep? We will have for you a couch made up that is softer and more perfumed than the bed made up for Semiramis, the Assyrian Queen who was famous for her sexual appetite. Do you wish to walk? We will spread rushes before you to walk on. Do you wish to ride on horseback? Your horses shall be draped in decorative coverings and their harnesses studded and decorated with gold and pearls. Do you wish to go hawking? You own hawks that will soar above the morning larks. Or do you wish to hunt? Your hounds shall make the welkin — the sky — answer their cries. Shrill echoes will come from the depths of the earth.”

The first servant said, “If you wish to hunt hares, your greyhounds are as swift as rested stags — indeed, they are fleeter than the young deer.”

The second servant said, “Do you wish to look at pictures? We will immediately fetch for you a painting of Adonis by a running brook and Venus, who loved him, hidden among rushes that seem to play amorously as they are moved by her sighs as she spies on him. The rushes move with her breath just like they move when wind blows over them.”

The Lord said, “If you want us to, we will show you a painting of Io when she was a maiden and Jupiter tricked her and visited her to make love to her. Afterward, Jupiter’s wife, Juno, changed Io into a cow. This painting is very realistic.”

The third servant said, “Or we will show you a painting of Daphne fleeing from Apollo in a thorny wood — the thorns scratch her legs and she cries. This painting is done so realistically that you shall swear she bleeds. Even the god Apollo would weep at that sad sight because the blood and tears are painted so skillfully.”

“You are a Lord, and nothing but a Lord,” the Lord said to Christopher Sly. “You have a wife who is far more beautiful than any other woman in this corrupt and declining age.”

The first servant said, “Until the tears that she has shed for you flowed over her lovely face like malicious floods, she was the most beautiful woman in the world. Even now, she is inferior to none.”

The mention of a wife — a bed-partner — interested Christopher Sly, who said, “Am I a Lord? And have I such a wife? Do I dream? Or have I dreamed until now? I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak; I smell sweet fragrances and I feel soft things. Upon my life, I am a Lord indeed. I am not a tinker, and I am not Christopher Sly. Well, bring my wife here before me. And, as I said before, bring me a pot of the smallest ale.”

The second servant said, “Will it please your mightiness to wash your hands? Oh, how we rejoice to see your sanity and wit restored! Oh, that once more you knew but what you are! These fifteen years you have been in a dream. Even when you were awake, it was as if you slept.”

“These fifteen years!” Christopher Sly said. “By God, that is quite a nap. But didn’t I ever speak in all that time?”

The first servant replied, “Oh, yes, my Lord, but you spoke very silly words. Although you lay here in this fine bedchamber, yet you would say that you were being beaten out of a tavern. And you would shout about the hostess of the tavern and say that you would take her to court because she brought stone jugs of watered-down ale instead of quarts with seals guaranteeing quality. Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.”

“Yes, she is the landlady’s maiden daughter,” Christopher Sly said.

The third servant said, “Why, sir, you know no such tavern and no such maiden daughter. You also do not know these men whom you have referred to: Stephen Sly and John Naps of Greet, a village near Stratford-upon-Avon. You also do not know Peter Turph and Henry Pimpernell and twenty more such names and men as these who have never existed and whom no one has ever seen.”

“May God be thanked for my good improvement!” Christopher Sly said.

To that, everyone present said, “Amen.”

“Thank you,” Christopher Sly said. “You will be rewarded for your good wishes.”

Dressed in women’s clothing, Bartholomew, the Lord’s page, entered the bedchamber, along with some servants.

“How fares my noble Lord?” Bartholomew asked.

“I fare well because here is lots of hospitable entertainment,” Christopher Sly replied.

He added, “Where is my wife?”

“Here I am, my noble Lord,” Bartholomew replied. “What do you want?”

“Are you my wife and will not call me husband?” Christopher Sly said. “My men should call me ‘Lord.’ I am your goodman: your husband.”

“You are my husband and my Lord, my Lord and my husband,” Bartholomew said. “I am your wife in all obedience. I have promised to love, honor, and obey you.”

“I well know it,” Christopher Sly replied.

He asked the others present, “What must I call her?”

The Lord replied, “Madam.”

“Alice Madam, or Joan Madam?” Christopher Sly asked.

“Just ‘Madam,’ and nothing else,” the Lord said. “That is the way that Lords call their wives.”

“Madam Wife, they say that I have dreamed and slept some fifteen years or more,” Christopher Sly said.

“That is true, and the time seems like thirty years to me,” Bartholomew said. “All those years I have been banished from your bed.”

“That is a very long time,” Christopher Sly said.

He added, “Servants, leave me and her alone.”

He then said to Bartholomew, “Madam, undress and come to bed now.”

Thinking quickly, Bartholomew said, “Three times noble Lord, let me beg of you to excuse me from fulfilling your request until a night or two have passed, or, if you will not, to wait until the Sun sets. Your physicians have strictly ordered me to stay out of your bed for a while because you are still at risk of becoming ill again. I hope that you accept this reason for my staying out of your bed at this time. I hope that you will let this reason stand.”

“This reason is not the only thing standing,” Christopher Sly, glancing at a bump in the bedding immediately over his crotch. “It will be difficult for me to wait a day or two or even until the Sun sets. However, I would hate to fall ill and vanish into my dreams again. I will therefore wait to bed you despite what my flesh and the blood in it urge me to do.”

A messenger entered the bedchamber and said, “Your honor’s actors, hearing about your improvement, have come to perform a pleasant comedy because your doctors believe it will be good for you. Your doctors believe that you are much too sad and that your sadness has slowed your blood. They also believe that melancholy leads to madness. Therefore, they thought it good that you watch a play that will fill your mind with mirth and merriment. Laughter prevents a thousand harms and lengthens life.”

“I will watch it; let the actors perform it,” Christopher Sly said. “But what is a comondy? Is it a Christmas game or dance, or is it a tumbling-trick and acrobatics?”

Bartholomew thought, *He is unfamiliar with the word “comedy.”*

Bartholomew said, “No, my good Lord; a comedy is more pleasing stuff.”

“What stuff — household stuff?” Christopher Sly said. “Like a husband stuffing a wife with semen?”

“It is a kind of history,” Bartholomew said.

“Well, we will see it,” Christopher Sly said. “Come, Madam Wife, sit by my side and let the world slip by. Right now is the youngest that we will be for the rest of our lives.”

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

Lucentio and Tranio, his servant, had just arrived in Padua, Italy. They were conversing in a public street.

Lucentio said, “Tranio, I have always wanted to see beautiful Padua, nursery of learning and home of a famous university founded in 1228. I have now arrived in Padua while on my way to fruitful Lombardy, which is the pleasant garden of great Italy. With my father’s love and permission, I have come here with his good will and your good company. My trusty servant, you have shown yourself to be good in every way. Here let us rest and perhaps begin a course of learning and ingenious studies.

“I was born in Pisa, which is renowned for grave and serious citizens, and my father, a merchant of great business throughout the world, was born there before me. My father is Vincentio, whose great and wealthy family is the Bentivolii. I, Vincentio’s son, was brought up in Florence. It is only right that I should fulfill the hopes conceived of me, and add virtuous deeds of my own to my father’s wealth and his own virtuous deeds.

“Therefore, Tranio, here I will study ethics and virtue and that part of philosophy that details how to achieve happiness by being virtuous — yes, I will study Aristotelian ethics. Aristotle taught that the way to become happy is through living a virtuous life.

“Tell me what you think. I have left Pisa and have come to Padua. I feel overwhelmed, like a man who leaves a shallow puddle and plunges into deep water and seeks to completely quench his thirst.”

“*Mi perdonato* — pardon me — my gentle master,” Tranio replied. “I am of the same mind as yourself; I think the same way that you think and feel the same way that you feel. I am glad that you thus continue your resolve to suck the sweets of sweet philosophy through its study.

“However, good master, while we do admire this virtue and this moral discipline, let us please not become Stoics or stocks. Stoics are philosophers who endure everything, and stocks are unfeeling blocks of wood that appreciate nothing. Let us take a middle path and appreciate the pleasures we have while enduring the pains we must. Let us not devote ourselves so completely to Aristotle’s disciplines that we neglect to read Ovid, a poet of love and seduction. Let us not make Ovid an outcast in our lives.

“This is what I advise: Engage in formal argument and logic with the friends that you have and practice rhetoric — the art of communication — in your common conversation. Allow music and poetry to quicken and entertain your senses and your spirits. Study mathematics and metaphysics for only as long as you are interested in them. No profit can be acquired where no pleasure is taken: You will not learn unless you take pleasure in the learning. In brief, sir, study what you most enjoy.”

“Many thanks, Tranio, you advise me well,” Lucentio said.

He added, “If Biondello, my other servant, had come ashore, we could at once get started and find a lodging fit to entertain the friends we will make here in Padua.”

He noticed some people coming out into the street and said, "But wait. Who are these people?"

"I'm guessing that they are here to welcome us," Tranio said. He knew that was not true.

Several people arrived, including Baptista and his two daughters, Katherina and Bianca. Katherina was the older of the two young and pretty daughters. Also present were Gremio and Hortensio, both of whom were courting Bianca. Gremio was an old man. From a short distance away, Lucentio and Tranio watched them.

Baptista said to Gremio and Hortensio, "Gentlemen, beg me no more. You know that I have made up my mind. I will not allow Bianca, my younger daughter, to marry until Katherina has married. I know you well and respect you well. If either of you wishes to court Katherina, you have my permission to do so."

Gremio thought to himself, *Court Katherina? Court her, more likely. Prostitutes and shrews are driven around in carts in public and humiliated. Of course, Katherina is not a prostitute — she is a shrew, an ill-mannered, disobedient, and rude woman. She is too rough for me.*

Gremio asked, "Hortensio, will you take a wife? Why not marry Katherina?"

Katherina said to her father, "Sir, are you trying to make a whore of me amongst these mates? Am I to be given to anyone who asks for me?"

Hortensio said, "Mates, young maiden! What do you mean by that? You will get no mate — no husband — until you are of a gentler and milder character."

"Sir, you shall never need to fear marrying me," Katherina said. "Indeed, marriage is not even halfway to my heart — I have no interest in marriage. But even if I did, I would prefer to hit you over your silly head with a three-legged stool and paint your face red with blood and treat you like a fool rather than marry you."

Hortensio replied, "From all such devils may the good Lord deliver us!"

"And may the good Lord deliver me from all such devils!" Gremio said.

Tranio said to Lucentio, "Master, here is some good entertainment. That wench is either stark raving mad or wonderfully ill mannered."

"But in the other young woman, I see a maiden's mild behavior and modesty," Lucentio said, adding, "Now be quiet, Tranio."

"Well said, master," Tranio said. "I will be quiet as you gaze your fill at that modest young maiden."

"Gentlemen, I hope that I may soon make good on what I have said — I hope to soon find a husband for Katherina," Baptista said.

He added, "Good Bianca, go inside now. We don't need you to be outside so that men can see you and fall in love with you and want to marry you. At least not until your sister is married. And don't be unhappy that you have to wait to get married until after your older sister is married. I will still love you, my girl."

Katherina said, "Bianca is her father's pet. She can make herself cry whenever she wants — she puts her finger in her eye."

Bianca replied, "Sister, be content although I am discontent."

She added to her father, "Sir, I will humbly obey you. My books and musical instruments shall be my company. I will read my books and practice my music in solitude."

"Tranio, when she speaks it is as if we are hearing the voice of Minerva, goddess of wisdom," Lucentio said.

"Signior Baptista, will you be so unnatural a father?" Hortensio asked. "I am sorry that our good will has caused grief for Bianca."

"Why will you cage Bianca up, Signior Baptista, because of this fiend of hell, her older sister?" Gremio asked. "Why make Bianca bear the punishment of Katherina's sharp tongue?"

"Gentlemen, I have made my decision," Baptista said. "You will have to be content with it. I will not change my mind."

Baptista thought, *Women should be married. If I will not allow Bianca to marry until after Katherina is married, perhaps Bianca's suitors will help me to find a husband for Katherina.*

He added, "Go inside the house, Bianca."

She obeyed.

Baptista said to Gremio and Hortensio, "Because I know that Bianca takes much delight in listening to music, playing musical instruments, and reading poetry, I plan to hire tutors to stay in my house and teach her. If you, Hortensio, or you, Signior Gremio, know any such tutors capable of teaching my young daughter, send them to me. I will pay intelligent tutors well; I am willing to spend liberally to raise and educate my children well. And so to you I say farewell."

He said to his older daughter, "Katherina, you may stay outside for now because I have more to say to Bianca."

Baptista went inside his house.

Katherina said, "I trust I may go inside the house, too — why shouldn't I? What, shall I be appointed hours for when I can see my own father? Does he think that I am so stupid that I don't know what is valuable, that I don't know what to take and what to leave behind?"

She went inside the house.

Gremio, the old man who was hoping to marry Bianca, said about Katherina, "You may go to the devil's dam — the devil's mother is even worse than the devil! The devil's mother is the archetypal shrew! Your character is such that no one will stop you from leaving!"

To Hortensio, Gremio said, "Our love of women is not so important that we cannot wait patiently and do without for a while. Neither of us has gotten Bianca for a wife, and our failure is as if we have gotten a badly baked cake — our cake is mostly dough. Farewell. Yet, because of the love I bear my sweet Bianca, if I can by any means find a fit man who can teach her that wherein she delights, I will recommend him to her father."

"So will I, Signior Gremio," Hortensio replied, "but listen to me, please. Though the nature of our competition for Bianca's hand in marriage has never allowed us to really talk to each other,

we should realize that now we ought to work together so that we may yet again have access to our fair mistress and be happy rivals in Bianca's love. If we work together to effect one thing specially, we can return to wooing Bianca."

"What thing is that, I ask?"

"Sir, to get a husband for her sister, Katherina."

"A husband! You must mean a devil!"

"I say, a husband."

"And I say, a devil. Do you think, Hortensio, that although Katherina's father is very rich, any man would be so great a fool as to be married to a hellion?"

"Tush, Gremio, although it is beyond your patience and mine to endure her loud and startling cries, why, man, there are good fellows in the world, if a man could find them, who would take her with all her faults, and with quite a lot of money."

"I don't know about that, but I do know that I would just as soon take her dowry with the condition that I be publicly whipped at the center of town every morning as I would with the condition that I endure her shrewishness."

"As you say, there is little choice when it comes to choosing between rotten apples," Hortensio said. "But, this obstacle to a possible future happy married life with Bianca should make us temporary friends and allies, and so we ought to work together to help Baptista's elder daughter, Katherina, to find a husband so that we can set his younger daughter, Bianca, free to find a husband. After we accomplish that, we can go back to being rivals and competitors."

"Sweet Bianca! May the winner's prize make him happy! He who runs fastest gets the ring — the prize of a wedding ring. What do you say, Signior Gremio?"

"I am agreed, and I would give Katherina's suitor the best horse in Padua to begin his wooing if he would thoroughly woo her, wed her and bed her, and rid the house of her! Let's go."

Gremio and Hortensio exited.

Tranio looked at Lucentio and realized that Lucentio was in love. He asked, "Is it possible that you can have fallen in love so quickly?"

"Tranio, until it happened to me, I never thought it was possible or likely, but while I idly stood and watched this scene, I found the effect of the flower named love-in-idleness, which causes people to fall in love. And now I honestly do confess to you, who are to me as trustworthy and as dear as Anna was to her sister, Dido, the Queen of Carthage, that I burn and I long for this young maiden named Bianca. I will perish, Tranio, if I do not win this young modest girl as my wife. Give me good advice, Tranio, for I know that you can. Help me, Tranio, for I know that you will."

"Master, it is not the right time to scold you. Scolding you will not drive love from your heart. If love has touched you, nothing remains but this: '*Redime te captum quam queas minimo*' — 'Ransom yourself from captivity as cheaply as you can.'"

"Many thanks, lad," Lucentio said. "Continue. What you have said pleases me. The rest of what you have to say will also please me because you give me good advice."

“Master, you looked so long and so longingly on the maiden that I am afraid that you did not notice what is the most important thing facing you.”

“I saw sweet beauty in her face,” Lucentio said. “Such beauty Europa, the daughter of Agenor, had. Jupiter fell in love with her, assumed the form of a bull, and carried her away to Crete. Jupiter knelt before her and kissed her hand. Europe was named after her.”

“Didn’t you notice anything else?” Tranio asked. “Didn’t you notice how her older sister, Katherina, began to scold and raise up such a storm that mortal ears could hardly endure the din?”

“Tranio, I saw Bianca’s coral lips move — with her breath she perfumed the air. Everything I saw in her was sacred and sweet.”

Tranio said to himself, “It is time for me to wake him from his trance.”

To Lucentio, he said, “Please, wake up, sir. If you love the maiden, take thought and use your wits to win her. This is how it stands: Her older sister is so curst and ill tempered that until the father rids his hands of her, your loved one must live and stay at home. Her father has tightly caged her up so that no suitors can woo her.”

“Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father he is! But let us remember that he is taking some care to get knowledgeable schoolmasters to tutor her.”

“I know that, sir, and I have a plan.”

“So do I,” Lucentio said.

“I am guessing that we have both come up with the same plan.”

“Tell me your plan first,” Lucentio said.

“You will pretend to be a tutor and undertake to teach the maiden. Is that your plan, too?”

“It is. Can it be done?”

“It is not possible,” Tranio said, “for who shall play your part, and pretend to be you, Vincentio’s son, in Padua here. Who will stay in your house and study your books, welcome your friends, and visit your countrymen and entertain them?”

“*Basta* — enough. Don’t worry. I know what to do. We have not yet been seen by anyone, and so no one knows our faces. No one knows who is the master and who is the servant. Therefore, Tranio, you shall pretend to be me. You will live in my dwelling and live my lifestyle and hire servants to wait on you just as if you were me. I will pretend to be someone else — some Florentine, or some Neapolitan, or a lower-class man of Pisa. That is our plan. Tranio, take off your servant’s dark-colored hat and cloak and instead put on my brightly colored hat and cloak.”

They exchanged hats and cloaks.

“When Biondello comes, he will pretend to be your servant and wait on you. I will talk to him first so that he will hold his tongue and keep our secret.”

“It is a good idea to talk to Biondello and advise him what to do,” Tranio said. “Sir, I am required to be obedient, for so your father ordered me to be at our parting — he said, ‘Do your best to serve my son’ — although I do not think that he had this in mind. Because of his order and because this is what you want me to do, I am happy to pretend to be Lucentio because I love and respect Lucentio.”

“Tranio, be of good service to me because I am in love. I will pretend to be a tutor — a servant — in order to win Bianca as my wife — the young woman with whom at first sight I have fallen in love.”

Lucentio looked up and said, “Here comes the rogue — my servant Biondello — now.”

Biondello walked up to them.

“What have you been up to?” Lucentio asked him.

“What have I been up to!” Biondello said. “What have you two been up to? Master, has my fellow Tranio stolen your clothes? Or have you stolen his? Or have each of you stolen the other’s clothes? Just what is going on?”

“Listen, this is no time to jest,” Lucentio said. “Behave soberly because the situation demands it.”

He then began to lie to convince Biondello to be quiet about the exchange of identities: “Your fellow Tranio here, to save my life, has put on my apparel and is pretending to be me. I have put on his apparel and am pretending to be him in order to save my life. After I came ashore, I quarreled with and killed a man and I am afraid that I was seen. Pretend to be Tranio’s servant — that’s an order. I need you to do that while I run away from here to save my life. Do you understand?”

“Do I understand? Of course!” Biondello said, but he thought, *Do I understand? Of course not!*

“And be sure not to call Tranio by his real name. Tranio is now Lucentio.”

“Good for him,” Biondello said. “I wish that I could say the same thing about me.”

Tranio said, “I would grant your wish if granting it meant that Lucentio indeed would win Baptista’s younger daughter as his wife. But my promotion is not for my sake but for Lucentio’s. Please be careful to address me as Lucentio in public and whenever other people are around. When we are alone, why, then I am Tranio. But when we are not alone, I am Lucentio, your master.”

“Tranio, let’s go,” Lucentio said. “One thing more needs to be done, and you will have to do it. You will have to be one of the suitors wooing Bianca. If you ask me why, I will not tell you, except to say that I have very good reasons for why you should do it.”

The actors exited, and the first servant said to Christopher Sly, “My Lord, you nod and are ready to fall asleep. You are not watching the play.”

“Yes, I am,” Christopher Sly said. “It is a good play, surely. Is there any more of it?”

Bartholomew said, “My Lord, it has barely begun.”

“It is a very excellent piece of work, Madam Lady,” Christopher Sly said, but he thought, *I wish the play were over!*

— 1.2 —

Petruchio and his servant Grumio stood on a street in front of Hortensio’s house in Padua.

Petruchio said, “Verona, for a while I have taken my leave of you so that I could travel to see my friends in Padua. Of all my friends, my best beloved and approved friend is Hortensio, and I think that this is his house. Grumio, knock here, I say.”

“Knock, sir! Whom should I knock? Has a man rebused your worship?”

Petruchio thought, *Rebused? He means, abused and rebuked. Grumio plays games with me and deliberately pretends to misinterpret what I order him to do. I have never been able to tame him and make him stop his misbehavior.*

“Knock here, and knock hard. Pound here, and pound hard.”

“Pound you, sir! Who do you think I am! Why should I pound on you?”

“Knock here before this door. Knock hard, or I will knock your head.”

“My master has grown quarrelsome,” Grumio said. “If I follow your orders and knock hard on you before this door, I doubt very much that you will be pleased. I might hit you first, but you will hit me harder.”

“You won’t obey my orders!” Petruchio said. “If you won’t knock, I will ring — I will either ring the bell or wring your ears. Since it is a servant’s duty to ring the bell, I know what a master should do — I will make you sing *sol-fa* in pain.”

He grabbed Grumio’s ears and wrung — twisted — them.

Grumio fell to the ground and shouted, “Help! My master is insane!”

“Now knock when I tell you to knock!”

Hortensio came to the door of his house and said, “What’s going on? What’s the matter? My old friend Grumio! And my good friend Petruchio! How is everyone in Verona?”

“Signior Hortensio, have you come to break up the fight?” Petruchio asked, “*Con tutto il cuore, ben trovato* — with all my heart I am glad to see you.”

Hortensio said, “Get up, Grumio, get up. We will settle this argument.”

He said to Petruchio, “*Alla nostra casa ben venuto, molto honorato signor mio Petruchio* — welcome to our house, much honored Petruchio.”

To Grumio, Hortensio said, “Get up. We will settle this quarrel.”

“It does not matter what he alleged to you in Latin,” Grumio replied.

*There he goes again,* Petruchio thought. *He is Italian, and he knows that we are speaking Italian, not Latin. He willfully misunderstands me.*

Grumio continued, "I now have a lawful reason to leave his service. Why, he ordered me to knock him and to pound on him! Is it fitting for a servant to obey such orders! He must be drunk or a card short of a full deck! Maybe I should have obeyed his orders. Maybe things would have worked out better for me."

"He is a foolish villain!" Petruchio said. "Good Hortensio, I ordered the rascal to knock on your door and for the life of me I could not get him to do it."

"Knock on the door!" Grumio said. "Hardly! You spoke to me and clearly said, 'Knock here, and knock hard. Pound here, and pound hard.' I didn't know that you were talking about the door! What else was I to think other than you were ordering me to hit you and to pound on you? And you tell me now that you were ordering me to knock on the door?"

"Either get out of here, or shut up," Petruchio said to Grumio. "I am warning you."

"Petruchio, have patience," Hortensio said. "Grumio will behave now. Why, this is a bad business between you and him. Grumio is your old, trusty, amusing servant. And tell me now, sweet friend, what happy wind blows you here to Padua from old Verona?"

"It is such a wind as scatters young men throughout the world to seek their fortunes farther than at home where little experience can be found," Petruchio said. "But in a few words, Signior Hortensio, this is how it stands with me: Antonio, my father, has died, and I have thrust myself into this maze of a world to — with any luck — happily to wive and thrive as best I may. I have money in my wallet and property at home, and so I have come abroad to see the world and to seek a wife."

"Petruchio, should I speak frankly to you and tell you where to find a woman who would make a shrewish and ill-tempered and sharp-tongued wife? I am afraid that you would thank me but little for my information, yet I promise you she shall be rich — very rich. However, you are too good a friend of mine for me to wish that you would marry her."

"Signior Hortensio, between two such friends as we are, a few words are enough for us to understand each other," Petruchio said. "Therefore, if you know a woman who is rich enough to be Petruchio's wife — and I want to marry a rich woman — then tell me about her."

"I do not care if she is as foul as was the wife of Florentius, a knight who quested to find the answer to the question 'What do all women most desire?' An ugly hag gave him the right answer — 'to be the ruler of a man's love' — but he had to marry her. In that case, all worked out because on their wedding night, the ugly hag turned into a beautiful young woman, She, the daughter of the King of Sicily, had been enchanted."

"I also do not care if she is as old as the Sibyl who was granted a wish by Apollo, god of light and music. She reached down and grabbed as much sand as she could and then asked to live as many years as she held grains of sand in her hand. In this case, things did not work out. She forgot to ask for eternal youth, and so she grows older and older and older and when she is asked what she wants, she replies that she wants to die."

"I also do not care if she is shrewish as — or worse than — Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates. She was so shrewish that Socrates turned to philosophy to acquire the patience to cope with her."

“This shrew whom you are talking about does not frighten or worry me or lessen my desire to marry a rich wife, and she would not even if she were as rough and violent as the swelling Adriatic seas. I come to wive it wealthily in Padua; and if I wive it wealthily in Padua, then I will wive it happily in Padua.

“I do not care if she is ugly, old, and ill tempered. I do care that she is rich — if I am to marry her, she must bring money to me.”

Petruchio clearly stated that what he looked for in a wife was the money that she would bring him. He also implied that money was all he looked for in a wife. However, his future actions would show that he wanted much more than just the money that a wife with a very rich father could bring him.

Grumio said, “My master speaks frankly and clearly. If you give him enough gold, he will be happy to marry a puppet or a small figurine or an old hag with not even a single tooth in her head even if she has as many diseases as fifty-two horses. Why, he will marry anything and see nothing amiss provided that he receives money from the marriage.”

“Petruchio, since I have told you so much already, even though I was joking, I will continue to give you information about the shrew and her father,” Hortensio said. “I can, Petruchio, help you to get a wife who has much wealth, who is young and beautiful, and who was brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman. Her only fault, and it is a grievous fault, is that she is intolerably curst and ill tempered and shrewish and perverse, so beyond all measure and to such an extreme that, were my financial situation far worse than it is, I would not wed her even if I were to get a gold mine in recompense.”

“Hortensio, peace!” Petruchio said. “You don’t know the effect that gold has on me. Tell me her father’s name and it will be all I need; for I will board her as though I were a pirate attacking a merchant ship — even though she chide and grumble as loud as thunder when the clouds in autumn crack with lightning.”

“Her father is Baptista Minola. He is an affable and courteous gentleman. Her name is Katherina Minola. She is famous in Padua for her sharp and scolding tongue.”

“I know her father, though I do not know her. Her father knew my late father well. I will not sleep, Hortensio, until I see her. So therefore let me be thus so rude to you as to leave you so quickly after we have met — unless you will accompany me as I visit her father and her.”

“Please, sir,” Grumio said, “let him go while the mood lasts. I swear that if she knew Petruchio as well as I do, she would think that scolding him would have little effect upon him. She may perhaps call him ‘knave’ half a score times or so, but that’s nothing to him. Why, once he begins to reply to her, he will scold her with his own rope-tricks.”

Petruchio thought, *Grumio means rhetoric or perhaps tricks that would best be punished by hanging — or perhaps both.*

Grumio continued, “I’ll tell you what, sir, if she withstands him even a little bit, he will throw an insulting figure of speech in her face and so disfigure her with it that she shall have no more eyes to see with than a cat that has been fighting with another cat that has scratched out its eyes.”

“Wait a moment, Petruchio,” Hortensio said. “I will go with you. For in Baptista’s keep — his inner sanctum — he keeps my treasure. There he hides away his younger daughter, beautiful Bianca, the jewel of my life. He is keeping her away from me and from all her other suitors — my rivals for her love. Baptista wants Katherina to be married. Knowing how difficult — or perhaps impossible — it is for such a marriage to take place because of her shrewish defects that I have told you about, Baptista has decreed that no suitor shall have access to Bianca until Katherina the curst — the ill tempered — has gotten a husband. Baptista is clever: He believes that by not allowing Bianca to be married until Katherina is married, Bianca’s suitors will help him find a husband for Katherina.”

Grumio declared, “Katherina the curst! Katherina the ill tempered! Those are the worst titles for a maiden who is the worst!”

“Petruchio, my friend, I want you to do me a favor,” Hortensio said. “I will disguise myself with a beard and sober academic clothing so that I look like a fully qualified tutor, and you, Petruchio, will introduce me to old Baptista and recommend that I become a music tutor to Bianca. With this trick, I will have the opportunity to see her. Unsuspected by Baptista, I can be alone with Bianca and woo her.”

“Here’s no knavery!” Grumio said sarcastically. “Look at how the young folks lay their heads together to find a way to fool the old folks!”

Grumio and Lucentio, who was disguised as a tutor, appeared on the street in front of Hortensio’s house.

Grumio said to Hortensio, “Look! Who are those people?”

“Be quiet, Grumio,” Hortensio replied. “The older man is my rival for the love of Bianca.”

He added, “Petruchio, let us stand here, off to the side, for a while and spy on them.”

Grumio said sarcastically about Grumio, an old man, “He is a fine young man and an amorous and romantic young man!”

Grumio said to the disguised Lucentio, “Very well. I have read over this list of books for when you tutor Bianca. Buy them unbound and have them very beautifully bound. Make sure that they are all books about love — do not give her any other kind of lessons because I want her to think about love and marriage. You understand me. Signior Baptista will pay you to tutor Bianca; I will give you additional money to represent my interests. Take the paper that you will use in the lessons and let me have it very well perfumed because Bianca is sweeter than perfume itself. What will you read to her?”

“Whatever I read to her, I will plead your love for her as well and strongly as if you, my patron, were standing in front of her. I may even be able to plead your case better than you yourself could — unless you were a scholar, sir.”

“What a wonderful thing learning is!” Grumio said. “Scholars are so proficient with words that they must be very wise.”

“What a wonderful ass is this stupid woodcock!” Grumio said. “Woodcocks are so easily caught in traps that they must be very stupid.”

“Be quiet!” Petruchio said to Grumio.

“Grumio, be quiet,” Hortensio said.

He then said, “God bless you, Signior Gremio.”

“We are well met, Signior Hortensio,” Gremio replied. “Do you know where I am going? To visit Baptista Minola. I promised to inquire carefully about a tutor for the beautiful Bianca, and by good fortune I have found this young man, who is just the tutor she needs. He is learned and has good manners, and he is well read in poetry and other books — all of them good ones, I promise you.”

“That is good,” Hortensio replied. “I myself have met a gentleman who has promised to help me to find an additional tutor for Bianca: a fine musician. Therefore, I will also be able to serve beautiful Bianca, who is so beloved by me.”

“She is so beloved by me,” Gremio said. “My deeds will prove that.”

“So will his moneybags,” Grumio said.

“Gremio, this is not the time to express our love for Bianca,” Hortensio said. “Listen to me, and if you are polite, I will tell you news that is equally good for both of us. Here is a gentleman whom I met by chance. If you and I can come to a financial agreement that is acceptable to him, he will woo curst Katherina — and marry her, if her dowry pleases him.”

“If he actually does what he says he will do, it is good,” Gremio said. “Hortensio, have you told him all her faults?”

Petruchio said, “I know she is an irksome and brawling scold. If that be all, sirs, I hear no harm that can stop me from wooing and marrying her.”

“Are you sure?” Gremio asked. “Where are you from?”

“I was born in Verona, and I am old Antonio’s son,” Petruchio said. “My father is dead, and I inherited his fortune, and I hope to live a good and long life.”

“Sir, such a life, with such a wife, is unlikely!” Gremio said. “But if you have a stomach for it, and you want to woo and marry Katherina, then go to it, by God! You shall have my help in so doing. But do you really intend to woo this wildcat?”

“Do I really intend to continue to breathe and to live?” Petruchio replied.

“Will he woo her?” Grumio said. “Yes, or I’ll hang her. Why should she escape bad fortune? I am not sure which — Petruchio or the hanging — is the frying pan and which is the fire.”

“Why have I come here but for the purpose of wooing and marrying her?” Petruchio said. “Do you think that a little din and racket can hurt my ears? Have I not in my time heard lions roar? Have I not heard the sea — puffed up with winds — rage like an angry boar coated with sweat? Have I not heard great cannon in the battlefield, and Heaven’s artillery thunder in the skies? Have I not in a pitched battle heard loud calls to arms, neighing steeds, and the noise of trumpets? And you want me to be afraid of a woman’s tongue, that gives not half so great a blow to the ears as will a chestnut popping in a farmer’s fire? You would be better off trying to frighten boys with boogiemen.”

Actually, Petruchio was a young man who was seeing the world for the first time. He had made up this exciting past history.

“Petruccio fears no shrews and no boogiemens,” Grumio said.

“Hortensio, listen to me,” Gremio said. “This gentleman of yours — Petruccio — is fortunately arrived, I think, for his own good and ours.”

“I promised we would pay for his costs in wooing Katherina,” Hortensio said.

“And so we will, provided that he wins and marries her,” Gremio said.

“He will,” Grumio said. “I would bet a good dinner on it and so be sure that I will be well fed.”

Tranio, who was dressed in Lucentio’s fine clothing, and Biondello, who was dressed in his usual servant’s clothing, appeared on the street. They ignored the disguised Lucentio and pretended not to know him.

Tranio, Lucentio’s servant who was disguised as Lucentio, said, “Gentlemen, God bless you. If I may be so bold, tell me, please, which is the readiest way to the house of Signior Baptista Minola?”

“The Signior Baptista Minola who has two daughters — is that the man you mean?” Biondello asked, making clear which man Tranio was asking about.

“Yes, that is the man, Biondello,” Tranio said.

“Do you mean to see the daughter, sir?” Gremio asked.

“Perhaps I mean to see both him and her, sir,” Tranio said, “but what business is it of yours?”

“I hope that you are not going to see the daughter who is the shrew,” Petruccio said.

“I don’t care for shrews,” Tranio replied. “Biondello, let’s go.”

Quietly, Lucentio said to Tranio, “Your pretending to be me is off to a good start. Well done.”

“Sir, a word before you go,” Hortensio said. “Are you a suitor to the maiden you talked about — the one who is not a shrew. Yes or no?”

“And if I am a suitor to her, sir, is that a problem?” Tranio replied.

“No,” Gremio said, “if without more words you will leave here.”

“Why, sir, I ask you, are not the streets here as free to be used by me as to be used by you?”

“The streets are for both of us, but Bianca is not,” Gremio said.

“For what reason?” Tranio asked.

“For this reason, if you want to know — she is the chosen and choice love of Signior Gremio,” Gremio said.

“She is the chosen and choice love of Signior Hortensio,” Hortensio said.

“Just a moment,” Tranio said. “If you are gentlemen, do this for me: Listen patiently to me. Baptista is a noble gentleman, to whom my father is not completely unknown. His daughter is beautiful, and she is entitled to many suitors, including me. This would be true even if she were more beautiful — or less beautiful — than she is. Fair Leda’s daughter Helen, the most

beautiful woman in the world, had a thousand wooers, and so fair Bianca may have one more suitor — and so she does. I, Lucentio, would woo her even if Paris, Prince of Troy, came here in hopes to woo her all alone and to make her Helen of Troy.”

“Wow! This gentleman will out-talk us all,” Gremio said.

“Sir, do not check him the way that you would a horse,” Lucentio said. “Let him run unchecked. He will show himself to be a jade — a weak horse that will quickly tire and quit.”

“Hortensio, what is going on here?” Petruchio said. “Why is everyone arguing?”

Hortensio ignored Petruchio and said to Tranio, “Let me ask you, have you ever seen Baptista’s daughter?”

“No, sir,” Tranio replied, “but I hear that he has two daughters. One daughter is as famous for her scolding tongue as the other is for beauteous modesty.”

“Sir, I will woo the daughter with the scolding tongue,” Petruchio said. “Do not attempt to woo her.”

“Good idea,” Gremio said. “Leave that labor to great Hercules. He is already known for his twelve labors — hereafter let him be known for a thirteenth labor.”

“Sir, understand this,” Petruchio said. “The younger daughter — the one whom you should woo — her father keeps away from all suitors. He will not allow her to be married to any man until her elder sister the shrew is first wed. Only then will the younger daughter be free to marry and not before.”

Tranio replied, “If it is true, sir, that you are the man who will help all of Bianca’s suitors, including me, to gain access to her after you break the ice and get married to the elder daughter and so set free the younger daughter, then whoever shall win and marry Bianca will not be so ill-bred as to be ungrateful to you. You will be rewarded.”

“Sir, you speak well, and well do you understand what is in fact happening here,” Hortensio said. “Since you confess that you are a suitor to Bianca, you must do as we do and gratify this gentleman, Petruchio, with money to pay the cost of wooing Katherina, the shrewish elder daughter. All of us will benefit if he marries her — once he marries Katherina, we can woo Bianca.”

“Sir, I will pay my part of the expenses,” Tranio said. “To seal our pact, let us get together this afternoon and drink toasts to Bianca’s health. We will do what prosecuting lawyers and defense lawyers do — combat each other mightily in the arena but eat and drink as friends.”

Both Grumio and Biondello said, “Excellent idea. Let’s go.”

Hortensio agreed: “Good idea, indeed. Let’s do it. Petruchio, I will be your host and pay for your drinks.”

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

In a room in Baptista's house, Katherina was tormenting Bianca, whose hands Katherina had tied together.

Bianca pleaded, "Good sister, do not hurt me or your reputation by making a slave of me. That is something I hate and will not endure. But if you want, you can have my possessions. I am wearing jewelry. If you will untie my hands, I will take it all off myself and give it to you. You can even have my clothing — I will strip myself down to my petticoat. Or I will do whatever else you command me to do — I know my duty is to obey my elders."

"I order you to tell me which of your suitors you like the best," Katherina said. "Make sure that you do not lie to me."

"Believe me, sister, of all the men alive now I have never yet beheld a special face that I could fancy more than any other. I have no preference for any of my suitors."

Katherina was interested in marriage and suitors, but she had no suitors of her own.

She said to Bianca, "You are lying! Do you prefer Hortensio?"

"If you like him, sister, I swear here and now that I will plead to him to woo you ... if there is no other way for you to have him."

"Perhaps you fancy riches more than you do youth. You must want to marry Gremio so that he will buy you fine clothing."

"Is it because of him that you envy me so? No, you are joking. Now I see that you have been joking with me all this time. Please, sister Kate, untie my hands."

"If you think that I was just making a joke, then everything else was also a joke," Katherina said.

Baptista had heard the commotion, and now he came into the room in time to see Katherina hit Bianca.

"What are you doing, Dame Insolence!" Baptista said. "From where has come this bad behavior?"

He added, "Bianca, stand beside me. Poor girl! You are crying. Go and ply your needle and sew; have nothing to do with your sister."

As he untied Bianca's hands, he said to Katherina, "You should be ashamed, you good-for-nothing with a devilish spirit. Why are you hurting her who never did anything to hurt you? When has she ever said to you a cross word?"

"Her silence mocks me, and I will get revenge on her because of her silence," Katherina said.

She moved toward Bianca, but Baptista blocked her way and said, "You dare to try to hurt Bianca in my sight?"

He added, "Bianca, go to another room."

"Why won't you leave me alone?" Katherina said. "Now I see that Bianca is your treasure. She must have a husband, and as an unmarried older sister I must follow the custom of dancing barefoot on her wedding day — that is supposed to break my bad luck in being unmarried! And if I die unmarried, I am supposed to lead apes to Hell instead of leading children to Heaven. That is the fate of an old maid. Don't talk to me. I will go and sit and cry until I can find an occasion to wreak my revenge on my sister."

Katherina exited.

Baptista watched her go and then said, "Has any man ever been so beset by troubles as I am?"

Several people now entered the room. Gremio and Petruchio walked in. So did Lucentio, who was disguised as a tutor. So did Hortensio, who was disguised as a musician. So did Tranio, who was disguised as Lucentio. Bringing up the rear was Lucentio's servant Biondello, who was carrying books and the stringed musical instrument known as the lute.

"Good day, neighbor Baptista," Gremio said.

"Good day, neighbor Gremio," Baptista said, adding, "God bless you all, gentlemen!"

"And you, too, good sir!" Petruchio said. He added, "Don't you have a daughter named Katherina, who is beautiful and virtuous?"

The word "virtuous" bothered Baptista, who knew that his elder daughter was a shrew. He replied, "I have a daughter, sir, called Katherina."

Gremio wanted Petruchio to succeed in marrying Katherina. He advised him, "You are too blunt. First go slow and be sociable and then get down to business."

"You are mistaken, Signior Gremio," Petruchio said. "I know what I am doing."

He said to Baptista, "I am a gentleman of Verona, sir. Having heard of Katherina's beauty and her wit, her affability and bashful modesty, her wondrous qualities and mild behavior, I am now so bold as to make myself an eager guest in your house to make my eyes witnesses of that report which I so often have heard. To show my appreciation for your hospitality and to pay for my entrance into your house, I present you with a recommendation for a servant of mine."

He pointed to the disguised Hortensio and said, "This man here is knowledgeable in music and in mathematics. He is entirely capable of teaching your daughter those two sciences, of which I know that she is not ignorant. Accept my recommendation of him, or else you do me wrong: His name is Litio, and he was born in Mantua."

"You are welcome here, sir," Baptista said to Petruchio, "and Litio is also welcome here, for your sake. But as for my daughter Katherina, I know that she is not the girl you want, which is a pity for me."

"I see that you do not mean to part with her," Petruchio said, "or else you do not like my company."

"Please don't misunderstand me," Baptista said. "I am saying only what I believe is the truth. But where are you from? And what is your name?"

“Petruccio is my name; I am Antonio’s son. He was a man well known throughout all Italy.”

“I have heard much about him,” Baptista said. “You are welcome here for his sake.”

Gremio said, “With all respect for your story, Petruccio, let us, who are humble suitors for Bianca, speak, too. *Backare!* Back off a little! You are too pushy!”

“Oh, pardon me, Signior Gremio; I am eager to be doing what needs to be done.”

He thought, *What needs to be done is my wooing of and marrying Katherina. Once I have married her and am sure of having a good wife, then she will need to be done and I will do her. I want a warm wife and a warm bed.*

“I doubt it not, sir,” Gremio said, “but you will curse your wooing if you are too eager. Neighbor Petruccio, this recommendation of a tutor is a gift very grateful to Baptista — I am sure of it.”

He added to Baptista, “To express the same kindness, I myself, who have been more in your debt than any other man, freely recommend to you this young scholar.”

He pointed to the disguised Lucentio and said, “He has long studied at the renowned university in Rheims, France. He is as well educated in Greek, Latin, and other languages as the other tutor is well educated in music and mathematics. His name is Cambio; please accept his services.”

“A thousand thanks, Signior Gremio,” Baptista said.

He said to the disguised Lucentio, “Welcome, good Cambio.”

To Tranio, who was pretending to be Lucentio, he said, “Gentle sir, I think that you have the bearing of a stranger in town. May I be so bold as to ask you why you have come here?”

“Pardon me, sir,” Tranio said. “The boldness is my own. I am a stranger in this city, and I have come here to make myself a suitor to your daughter, the beautiful and virtuous Bianca. I know about your firm decision not to allow Bianca to be married until Katherina, her elder sister, is married. I request that once you know who my father is that you give me the same freedom as Bianca’s other suitors to see her and to woo her. To help you educate your two daughters, I have brought you gifts. Here I give you a simple instrument — a lute — as well as this small packet of Greek and Latin books. If you accept them, then their worth is great. You will add to their value by accepting them.”

Biondello handed Baptista the gifts.

“Lucentio is your name,” Baptista said, looking at an inscription in one of the books. “Where are you from?”

“I am from Pisa, sir. My father is Vincentio.”

“Vincentio of Pisa is a man of great power and influence. I have heard good reports of him, and you are very welcome here, sir.”

Baptista said to the disguised Hortensio, “You take the lute,” and then he said to the disguised Lucentio, “You take the set of books.”

He then said to both of them, “You shall see your pupils now.”

Baptista called for a servant and then said to him, “Take these gentlemen to my daughters and tell them both that these gentlemen are their tutors. Tell my daughters to be on their best behavior.”

Lucentio, Hortensio, and the servant exited.

Baptista then said to those remaining, “We will go and walk a little in the garden, and then we will eat dinner. You are all very welcome here, and I hope that you will feel comfortable and at home here.”

Petruchio was eager to start wooing Katherina, whom he still had not seen.

“Signior Baptista,” he said, “my business requires haste. I cannot come every day here to woo Katherina. You knew my father well, and he has left me — his only heir — all his lands and possessions, which by good management I have increased rather than decreased their value. I am a man of property, and I am competent. I also get down to business quickly. Tell me, if I get your daughter Katherina to love me, what dowry will she bring to me when I marry her?”

“I have no sons. After my death, Katherina will get one half of my lands,” Baptista said. “As soon as she is married, she will bring you 20,000 crowns.”

“The dowry is acceptable,” Petruchio said. “Now for the dower. As her husband, I must provide for my wife if I should die first. If Katherina should survive me, she will receive all of my lands and all of my leases. My widow — should my wife outlive me — will receive a large income. Therefore, let us have legal contracts drawn up between us, so that each of us is legally obligated to do what we have promised to do.”

“We will do so,” Baptista said, “once you have gotten something that is very special: Katherina’s love. That is the most special thing of all — it is much more important than wealth, property, and income.”

Baptista thought, *Katherina is special. I want her to be happy, and she will be happily married only if she marries a man whom she can respect. Bianca, on the other hand, will — I am sure — marry whatever man I want her to. She will be happy with that man. In her case, I can have her marry her wealthiest suitor. After all, wealth is in fact important, although it is not the most important thing.*

“I will get her love. I promise you that, father — and you will be my father,” Petruchio said. “I am as fiercely determined as she is proud-minded. When and where two raging fires meet together, they consume the things that feed their fury. Although a small fire grows big with a little wind, extreme gusts of wind will blow out all the fire. That is the way that it will be with Katherina and me. I will be the great gust of wind that blows out her fire. She may be shrewish, but I am rough and I do not woo like a boy.”

Petruchio thought, *This metaphor, properly understood, states that both Katherina and I will change our behavior. Like the two fires, we will blow each other out. She will yield to me, and then I will yield to her. I will persuade her to change her behavior from a shrew to a wife who will love, honor, and obey me. “Persuade” is the right word; “force” is not the right word. The kind of change I want is the kind that cannot be forced, although a lot of persuasion is appropriate. To do that, I will assume a behavior that is different from my usual behavior, but I*

*will cast off that behavior once I have the wife that she will promise before God — in the marriage ceremony — that she will be: a wife who loves, honors, and obeys her husband. And I will do what I will promise before God — in the marriage ceremony — that I will do: I will love and cherish my wife.*

Petruchio had impressed Baptista, who thought, *Petruchio may be exactly the right man to woo and marry Katherina. Make no mistake, Katherina needs to be tamed. Just a few minutes ago, she tied up and beat her sister. No one deserves to be so badly treated — especially a relative. I think that Katherina is intelligent. I would not be surprised if Katherina knows that she needs to be tamed. Neither I nor Katherina — I think — wants her to keep on acting the way she has been acting.*

Baptista said to Petruchio, “I hope that you woo Katherina well, and good luck to you! But be prepared for some unhappy words that she will call you.”

“When it comes to harsh words, I am wearing tested steel armor,” Petruchio said. “I can withstand harsh language the way that mountains withstand winds. Mountains do not shake no matter how hard the wind blows.”

The disguised Hortensio now entered the room. The lute that Tranio had given to Baptista was now broken — and so was Hortensio’s head.

“Hello, my friend,” Baptista said. “Why do you look so pale?”

“I am pale from fear,” Hortensio said. “You can be sure of that.”

“Will my daughter Katherina become a good musician?” Baptista asked.

“I think she will sooner become a good soldier,” Hortensio said. “Pistols and bullets may withstand her treatment, but never lutes.”

“So you are saying that you cannot teach her to play the lute? You cannot break down the steps of playing a lute?”

“No, I cannot,” Hortensio said, “because she has broken the lute on my head. All I did was to tell her that her hands were not placed correctly on the frets of the lute. She got angry and said, ‘Do you think that I am fretting? I will show you that I am fuming!’ With that word, she struck me on the head with the lute and both my head and the lute broke. There I stood amazed for a while with the lute around my neck like a wooden collar. She called me names — rascal fiddler and twangling Jack, and twenty more such vile terms. It was as if she had memorized the names just to be prepared to insult me with them.”

“By God, Katherina is a spirited wench,” Petruchio said. “She is full of life, and now I love her ten times more than ever I did. How I long to talk to her!”

Baptista said to Hortensio, “Come with me and do not be so discouraged. Go and tutor my younger daughter. She is eager to learn and thankful for good tutoring.”

He added, “Signior Petruchio, will you go with us, or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?”

“Please send Kate to me,” Petruchio said.

Everyone left except for Petruchio.

Alone, Petruchio planned his course of action in dealing with the shrew whom he wanted to marry: “I will wait for her here and woo her with some spirit when she comes. If she shouts at me, why then I’ll tell her plainly that she sings as sweetly as a nightingale. If she frowns, I’ll say she looks as cheerful as morning roses newly washed with dew. If she is mute and will not speak a word, then I will compliment her talkativeness and say that she is speaking with moving eloquence. If she orders me to leave, I will give her thanks as though she asked me to stay by her for a week. If she refuses to wed me, I will ask her to name the day when our engagement will be announced and when we will be married. I will treat her as if she were already the good woman I want her to be. I will give her a good image of herself.”

He saw Katherina enter the room and said to himself, “Here she comes now. Petruchio, speak to her.”

To Katherina, he said, “Good day, Kate, for that is your name, I hear.”

“You are somewhat hard of hearing. People who talk about me call me Katherina.”

“Truly, you lie,” Petruchio said. “You are called plain Kate, and you are called pretty Kate and sometimes Kate the curst, but you are Kate, the prettiest Kate in the Christian world. You are Kate of Kate Hall, and you are my super-dainty Kate. Dainty cakes are delicacies, and you are a delicacy. Therefore, Kate, listen to my comforting words. Hearing your mildness praised in every town, your virtues spoken of, and your beauty complimented, yet not to the degree you deserve, I am moved to woo you to be my wife.”

“Moved, are you?” Katherina said. “Let whoever moved you here now remove you from here. The moment I saw you I knew that you were a moveable.”

“Why, what’s a moveable?” Petruchio asked.

“A wooden stool — something that is hard like your head.”

“A stool has hard wood to be sat on, so come, Kate, and sit on me.”

“Asses are made to bear, and so are you. Bear a load, you ass.”

“Women are made to bear, and so are you. Women bear children, and in order to become pregnant, they bear the weight of a man in the missionary position.”

“I have no intention of bearing your children or your weight. You are a jade, a horse without stamina, and I doubt that you have stamina in bed.”

Petruchio thought, *I am not a rapist. I want to marry Kate, but I do not want to consummate the marriage with a meeting of bodies until after Kate and I have had a meeting of minds.*

“Not yet will I have you bear the burden of my weight,” Petruchio said, “because you are young and light —”

“I am too light for such a country bumpkin as you to catch, and yet I am as heavy as my weight should be. I am not like a gold coin whose edge has been shaved and so is worth less than it ought to be.”

“Be! Bee! Buzz! I hope that you can avoid the buzzing that would surround you if you became the subject of gossip,” Petruchio said. “Light women are often the subject of gossip because it is easy to move them into a position for sexual intercourse.”

Katherina said, “‘Buzz’ is what I would expect you to say — you are like a buzzard.”

“You are like a slow-winged turtledove — the symbol of faithful love! Shall a buzzard take you?”

“If a buzzard should take me for a turtledove, the buzzard is mistaken.”

“Come, come, you wasp; truly, you are too angry.”

“If I am waspish, you had best beware my sting,” Katherina said.

“My remedy is to pluck your sting out. That way, I need not fear it.”

“That is a good remedy — if you, a fool, could find out where my sting is.”

“Who does not know where a wasp keeps its sting? In its tail.”

“No, the sting is in the tongue.”

“Whose tongue?”

“Yours, if you talk of tales, and so I say farewell to you.”

“What, with my tongue in your tail?” Petruchio said.

He said to Katherina, “Good Kate, I am a gentleman.”

“I will see whether you are a gentleman,” Katherina said, and she hit him.

Petruchio looked her in the eyes and said, seriously, “I swear that I will hit you, if you hit me again.”

Katherina decided not to hit him again.

She said, “If you do, you will lose your arms. If you hit me, you are no gentleman, and if you are no gentleman, why then, you will have no coat of arms.”

“Are you a herald, Kate? If you are, then put me in your heraldic book that lists gentlemen! Let me be on good terms with you.”

“If you are a gentleman, then what is your crest? What heraldic device do you have? What is on your heraldic badge? Is it the feathers on a bird’s head? Is it the crest of a cock? Is it a coxcomb? My guess is that it is a coxcomb — the hat worn by a court fool.”

“If you, Kate, will be my hen, then I will be a combless cock. A cock without a comb is nonthreatening and non-aggressive, and a husband should not threaten his wife.”

“You will never be a cock of mine — you have the crow of a craven, defeated fighting-cock.”

“Come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.”

“I always look sour when I see a sour crabapple.”

“No crabapple is here, and so therefore do not look sour.”

“A crabapple is here!”

“Then show it to me.”

“If I had a mirror, I would.”

“Are you saying that my face looks crabby?”

“I am surprised that such a young and inexperienced person as yourself realized that,” Katherina said.

“By Saint George, I am too young and too strong for you.”

“Yet you are withered.”

“It is with cares.”

“I don’t care.”

“Kate, listen carefully. You will not escape me.”

“I will irritate you, if I stay here. Let me go.”

“You will not irritate me, Kate. I find you quite gentle. I was told that you are rough and withdrawn and sullen, but the people who told me that lied because you are pleasant, full of fun, very courteous, and slow in speech — you think before you speak. You are as sweet as springtime flowers. You are unable to frown, to glare, and to bite your lip, as angry women do. You do not take pleasure in arguments, but instead you entertain your wooers with gentle, quiet, and friendly conversation.”

He added, “Why does all the world say that you, Kate, metaphorically limp? The world is filled with slanderers! Kate, you are like the hazel tree. You are straight and slender and as brown in hue as hazel nuts, and you are sweeter than the nuts’ kernels. I know you. You do not limp.”

“Go away, fool, and give commands to your servants.”

“Did ever the beautiful Diana, goddess of chastity, so become a grove of trees as you, Kate, become this chamber with your princess-like gait? You be Diana, and let her be Kate. Then let Kate be chaste and Diana be playful and amorous!”

“Where did you study all this fancy speech?”

“It is extempore. I have made it up on the spur of the moment, using my mother-wit.”

“It is good that you had a witty mother! Otherwise, her son would have been witless.”

“Am I not wise?”

“You are barely wise enough to keep yourself warm in cold weather.”

“I have every intention of marrying you, Kate, and of keeping myself warm in your bed. Therefore, let us set all this chitchat aside, and I will speak plainly. Your father has consented that you shall be my wife; we have agreed upon your dowry. Whether you are willing to marry or not, I will marry you. Kate, I am the husband who is just right for you. I swear by this light, by means of which I see your beauty — your beauty that makes me love you — you must be married to no man but me. Because, Kate, I am the man — the husband — who was born to tame you, Kate, and bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate who is a loving, honoring, and obedient Christian wife like other housewife Kates.”

Seeing Baptista, Gremio, and Tranio coming toward them, Petruchio added, “Here comes your father. Do not deny me. I must and will have Katherina as my wife.”

Baptista said, “Signior Petruchio, how are you and my daughter getting along?”

“How should we get along but well, sir? How but well? It is impossible that I should not get along well with your daughter.”

“How are you, my daughter Katherina?” Baptista said. “You look in the dumps — miserable.”

“Are you calling me your daughter? Ha! You are showing quite a tender fatherly regard for me when you wish me to wed this one-half lunatic, this madcap ruffian, this swearing Jack, this man who thinks to get his own way by bluffing with words!”

“Father,” Petruchio said, “the truth is that you and everyone else in the world who have talked about Kate have misunderstood her. If she seems shrewish, it is only an act. Katherina is not obstinate; she is as gentle as a dove. She is not hot; she is as temperate as the morning. Griselda was a medieval wife who was patient and submissive no matter how her husband provoked her; Kate will prove herself to be a second Griselda. The Roman wife Lucrece vowed — and meant that vow — to be faithful to her husband; Kate will prove herself to be a second Lucrece. Kate and I get along so well that we have agreed to be married on Sunday.”

“I will see you hanged on Sunday before I will marry you,” Katherina said.

Gremio said, “Did you hear that, Petruchio? She said that she will see you hanged on Sunday before she will marry you.”

Tranio said, “Do you call that getting along well with her? We can say goodbye to our hopes of marrying Bianca.”

Petruchio replied, “Relax, gentlemen. I choose her for myself. I am the one who is marrying her. As long as she and I are pleased with each other, you have nothing to worry about. She and I have decided, in private, when we were alone, that she will still be ill tempered and shrewish when she is around other people, although she is not when she and I are alone. I tell you, it is incredible to believe how much she loves me: She is the kindest and most darling Kate! She hugged and plied me with kiss after kiss and made promise after promise to love me forever. In the time it takes to blink an eye, she made me fall in love with her. You are newcomers to love! It is amazing to see, when a man and a woman are left alone and fall in love, how tame a timid man can make the most ill-tempered shrew.”

He added, “Give me your hand, Kate.”

He took her hand; she did not resist.

He said, “I will go to Venice to buy clothing for our wedding. Prepare and provide the feast, father, and invite the guests. I will be sure my Katherina shall be finely dressed.”

Everyone except Katherina looked at Baptista, who was puzzled. What was going on? Did his daughter want to marry this man or not? Baptista looked at Katherina, who was looking at Petruchio. She had a small smile on her face.

Baptista thought, *Petruchio may be just the husband my daughter Katherina needs — and wants. He may be just the man to tame her bad behavior and make her a good Christian wife.*

*If my daughter does not want to marry him, she will let me know. Petruchio is leaving to go to Venice, and so she and I will be able to be alone.*

He said, "I do not know what to say, Petruchio, but let us shake hands. God send you joy, Petruchio! You and Katherina will be married on Sunday."

Katherina thought, *I am intrigued by Petruchio, but am I intrigued enough to marry him although we have just met and we have spent all our time together engaging in a verbal combat — a battle of wits? Hell, yes!*

Gremio and Tranio said, "Amen! We will be witnesses to the wedding."

"Father, and wife, and gentlemen, adieu," Petruchio said. I am going now to Venice; Sunday will come very soon. We will have rings and things and a fine array of clothing. And kiss me, Kate — we will be married on Sunday."

Petruchio kissed Katherina, who did not kiss him back.

Petruchio and Katherina exited in different directions.

Gremio said, "Have two people ever decided to wed each other so quickly?"

"Indeed, gentlemen," Baptista said, "this is a risky venture. I am like a businessman who is making a desperate gamble in hopes of thereby profiting."

"Your daughter Katherina is like a commodity that was not being used," Tranio said. "Now she will either bring you happiness by making a good and happy marriage, or she will metaphorically perish on the seas."

"The profit that I seek is a quiet and peaceful marriage for Katherina," Baptista said.

Not meaning it, Gremio said, "I have no doubt that Petruchio has gotten a quiet catch."

He added, "But now, Baptista, let's talk about your younger daughter, Bianca. Now is the day we long have looked for: the day that you will choose a husband for her. I am your neighbor, and I am the man who wooed her first."

Tranio, who was still disguised as Lucentio and was trying to get Bianca as a wife for Lucentio, made his own pitch: "And I am one who loves Bianca more than words can witness, or your thoughts can guess."

Gremio replied, "Youngster, you cannot love so dearly as I."

"Graybeard, your love is ice cold," Tranio said.

"And your love is too hot. Skipping boy, back off. It is age that nourishes."

"But in ladies' eyes it is youth that flourishes."

"Calm down, gentlemen," Baptista said. "I will settle this quarrel. I believe that Bianca will be happy with whomever of you two I chose for her to marry, and therefore it is deeds — action and legal deeds, not talk — that must win the prize. Whoever of you two can give my daughter the greatest dower shall be her husband. So, Signior Gremio, what dower can you assure me she will get? If you die before she does, with what can she support herself?"

Baptista thought, *Hortensio was another of Bianca's suitors, but he has not been around for a while. Perhaps he has lost interest.*

Gremio replied, "First, as you know, my house within this city is richly furnished with silver and gold dishes and utensils. Bianca will have basins and ewers to wash her dainty hands. My wall hangings are all of expensive purple tapestry. I have stuffed my crowns in ivory strongboxes. My bedspreads are made of tapestry from Arras, France; these I store in chests made of cypress wood. I own expensive clothing, bed curtains and hangings and canopies, fine linen, cushions made in Turkey that are embroidered with pearls, valances made in Venice and decorated with gold needlework, pewter and brass and all things that belong to house or housekeeping. At my farm I have a hundred milk cows, sixty fat oxen standing in my stalls, and all things necessary for their maintenance. I myself am advanced in years, I confess, and if I die tomorrow, all of this is hers, provided that while I live Bianca will be only mine."

"That word 'only' is well chosen," Tranio said. "You have only a few possessions in comparison to me. Baptista, listen to me. I am my father's heir and only son; I need not share my father's estate with brothers when he dies. If I may have your daughter as my wife, I will leave her houses three or four as good — within the walls of rich Pisa — as the one house that Signior Gremio has in Padua. In addition, she will receive two thousand ducats each year in income from my fruitful land. All of this shall she receive as her dower."

Gremio looked shocked at such wealth.

Tranio said to him, "Are you shocked, Signior Gremio?"

Gremio said, "Two thousand ducats of annual income from the land!"

He thought, *The value of all my land does not reach two thousand ducats!*

Gremio said, "Bianca shall have everything that I mentioned previously, plus an argosy — a large merchant ship — that now is anchored in the harbor at Marseilles."

Tranio said, "Gremio, it is well known that my father has no less than three great argosies. In addition, he has two galliases — ships that are larger than galleys, and that use both sails and oars. He also has twelve watertight galleys in good repair. I will give all of this to Bianca, and I will give twice as much as whatever you offer next."

Gremio replied, "That is not necessary. I have already offered all that I have, and I have no more possessions to offer."

He said to Baptista, "If you like me and my offer, Bianca shall have me and all that is mine."

Tranio interrupted, "Why, then the maiden is mine. Out of all the men in the world, I have won her. You, Baptista, firmly promised that Bianca would be the wife of the man who offered her the most. Gremio has been outbid."

Baptista replied, "I must confess that your offer is the best. Now, your father must make this offer a legal obligation. If he does so, Bianca will be your wife. But if your father does not make your offer a legal obligation, then — pardon me — if you should die before your father, then what would happen to her dower?"

"That is a small point," Tranio said. "My father is old. I am young. I will outlive him."

Gremio asked, "And may not young men die, as well as old?"

"Well, gentlemen, I have made up my mind," Baptista said. "On this coming Sunday you know that my daughter Katherina is to be married. On the Sunday following that, Bianca will become your bride, Lucentio, as long as your father takes on this legal obligation. If your father will not, then Bianca will become the bride of Signior Gremio. And so, I take my leave of you, and I thank you both."

"Adieu, good neighbor," Gremio said as Baptista left.

Alone with Tranio, whom he understood to be Lucentio, Gremio said, "I do not believe that Bianca will marry you because I do not believe that your father will make this legal obligation. You have gambled by promising so much as your dower, and you will lose your bet. Your father would be a fool to give you everything, and in his old age to set his feet under your table and be totally dependent on you. Your promised dower is ridiculous. Old Italian fathers are foxes, my boy, and they are not so kind as to give away everything they have and be penniless."

Gremio exited.

Tranio said, "May vengeance be wreaked on your crafty withered hide! You are right. I have promised more than I can deliver. I have bluffed with a card that is a ten-spot — a card of lesser value than a Jack! It is my intention to do my master Lucentio good. The only thing that can be done now is for the pretend Lucentio — me — to get a pretend father. I will have to find someone to pretend to be Lucentio's father, Vincentio. That will be a wonder. Fathers commonly do get — that is, beget — their children; but in this case of wooing, a child shall get a father, if my cunning helps me to succeed in this plan."

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

Lucentio, Hortensio, and Bianca were in a room of Baptista's house. Lucentio and Hortensio were acting as Bianca's tutors. Lucentio had disguised himself as Cambio, a tutor of languages and philosophy; Hortensio had disguised himself as Litio, a teacher of music and mathematics. Lucentio and Hortensio had told Bianca who they really were, but Lucentio and Hortensio still thought that each other was a real tutor.

Lucentio said to Hortensio, "Fiddler, stop. You are too pushy, sir. Have you so soon forgotten the way that Bianca's sister, Katherina, treated you? She broke a lute on your head."

"That was Katherina, the shrew," Hortensio said, "and this is Bianca, the patroness of heavenly harmony. Therefore, give me leave to have the prerogative of teaching Bianca first. After we have spent an hour studying music, you — you wrangling pedant — shall have an hour to tutor her."

"You are a preposterous ass," Lucentio said. "You have not read enough to know the reason why music was created! Music was created to refresh the mind of man after his studies or his usual toil. Therefore, give me time to teach Bianca literature and philosophy, and afterward, while I rest, you can teach her harmony."

"Your remarks are offensive! I will not stand for them!"

Bianca interrupted, "Why, gentlemen, you both do me wrong. It is not your decision which of you should teach me first. It is my decision — I am the one who gets to choose. I am no scholar in the schools; I am not a student who can be whipped. I learn my lessons as and when it pleases me. Stop your arguing. All of us sit down. Litio, take your musical instrument and go over there and play it for a while. Cambio's lesson will be over before you have tuned your lute."

"You will leave his lesson when I am in tune?" Hortensio asked.

"That will be never," Lucentio said. "Go on and try to tune your instrument."

Bianca asked, "When did our last lesson end?"

"It ended here, madam," Lucentio said. "We were studying this:

*"Hic ibat Simois; hic est Sigeia tellus;*

*"Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis."*

These lines mean, "Here ran the Simois River; here was the Sigeian land; / Here stood the lofty palace of old Priam."

The lines are from Ovid, *Heroides I, Penelope Ulixi* [Penelope to Ulysses], lines 33-34, but some Latin words are misquoted.

Bianca requested, "Construe them."

Lucentio replied, speaking quietly so that Hortensio could not hear,

*“Hic ibat means As I told you before.*

*“Simois means I am Lucentio.*

*“Hic est means The son of Vincentio of Pisa.*

*“Sigeia tellus means Disguised thus to get your love.*

*“Hic steterat means And that Lucentio who comes a-wooing.*

*“Priami means Is my servant Tranio.*

*“Regia means Who is pretending to be me.*

*“Celsa senis means So that that we might trick the pantaloon — the ridiculous old man — who is named Gremio.”*

Hortensio said, “Madam, my instrument is in tune.”

“Let’s hear it,” Bianca said.

Hortensio strummed the strings.

Bianca said, “The treble is out of tune.”

“Spit in the hole, man,” Lucentio said, “and tune it again. The spit will make the peg tighter and keep the string in tune.”

Hortensio returned to tuning the lute.

Bianca said to Lucentio, “Now let me see if I can construe it:

*“Hic ibat Simois means I do not know you.*

*“Hic est Sigeia tellus means I do not trust you.*

*“Hic steterat Priami means Be careful that my music tutor does not hear you.*

*“Regia means Do not presume too much.*

*“Celsa senis means Do not despair.”*

Hortensio said, “Madam, it is now in tune.”

Lucentio replied, “All but the bass.”

Hortensio muttered, “The bass of the tune is in tune; it is that base knave Cambio who is out of tune. How fiery and forward this pedant Cambio is! I swear that he is courting Bianca, the woman I love. Little pedant! I will keep an eye on you!”

Bianca said to Lucentio, “In time I may believe you, yet now I mistrust you.”

“Do not mistrust me,” Lucentio said.

He said loudly so that Licio — the disguised Hortensio — could hear, “Aeacides is another name for Ajax. It identifies him as the grandson of Aeacus.”

Lucentio was partially right. He was referring to the next line of the quotation from Ovid that they had been working on. However, “Aeacides” means “grandson of Aeacus” and Aeacus had more than one grandson. In fact, scholars translate the Aeacides of the line as Achilles, grandson of Aeacus. Homeric warriors Great Ajax and Teucer was also grandsons of Aeacus.

Bianca, who knew more Latin and more mythology than her tutor, said, “I must believe my master, or else, I promise you, I would argue with you about this point. But let us let it go.”

She said loudly, “Now, Litio, it is your turn to tutor me. Good tutors, take it not unkindly, please, that I have been pleasant with you both and have not taken sides.”

Hortensio said to Lucentio, whom he thought was Cambio, “You may go and walk, and leave us for a while. My lessons have no music for three singers or three musicians.”

“Are you so formal, sir?” Lucentio replied. “Well, I must wait for my next turn to tutor.”

He thought, *And I must watch this tutor Litio because, unless I am deceived, our fine musician is falling in love with Bianca.*

Hortensio said quietly to Bianca, “Madam, before you touch the instrument, you must learn the correct fingering. To do that, I must begin by teaching you the fundamentals of this art. To teach you the scales more quickly, pleasantly, pithily, and effectually than any other music tutors can do, I have written out the scales in my own way.”

“Why, I learned my scales long ago,” Bianca protested.

“Nevertheless, please read the scales as written by Hortensio.”

Bianca read, “I am the scales, the beginning of all harmony,

“*A re* means *Hortensio pleads his passion.*

“*B mi* means *Bianca, take him for your husband.*

“*C fa ut* means *He loves you with all his heart.*

“*D sol re* means *He has one clef and two notes. He has two identities — Hortensio and Litio — but only one is real.*

“*E la mi* means *Show pity to me, or I will die.*”

Bianca complained, “Do you call this musical scales? I do not like it. Old fashions please me best. I am not so fussy that I will change tried, tested, and true rules for odd inventions.”

A servant entered the room and said, “Mistress, your father asks you to leave your books and help to decorate your sister’s bedroom. You know that tomorrow is the wedding-day.”

Bianca said, “Farewell, sweet tutors. I must be gone.”

She and the servant exited.

Lucentio said, “Since Bianca is no longer here, I have no reason to stay.”

He exited.

Hortensio, suspicious, said to himself, “But I have reason to investigate this pedant Cambio. I think that he looks as though he were in love. Bianca, if you are the type of girl to cast your wandering eyes on every low-born fellow who professes to love you, then I do not want you. If I ever catch you straying, then I will stray away from you and catch someone else.”

— 3.2 —

It was the Sunday during which Petruchio and Katherina were supposed to be married, but Petruchio had not shown up. Baptista, Gremio, Tranio, Katherina, Bianca, Lucentio, and others were waiting for Petruchio to show up, and they were beginning to think that he had jilted the bride on her wedding day.

Baptista said to the disguised Tranio, whom of course he thought was Lucentio, “Signior Lucentio, this is the appointed day during which Katherina and Petruchio should be married, and yet we have not heard from our supposed-to-be son-in-law. What will people say? What mockery and gossip will occur because no bridegroom is here although the priest is ready to ask him if he takes Katherina to be his lawfully wedded wife? Lucentio, do you have anything to say about this shame of ours?”

Katherina interrupted and said, “It is no shame of ours because it is nobody’s shame but mine. I have been, truly, forced to promise to marry — although my heart opposes it — a mad-brain rude lout who lacks all control. He deliberately wooed in haste and means to wed at leisure. I told you that he was a frantic fool, hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior. He wants a reputation as a merry fellow, and so he woos a thousand women, appoints the day of marriage, makes feasts, invites friends, and announces the engagement — and he does not intend ever to wed those women whom he has wooed. Now the world will point at poor Katherina, and say, ‘Look, there is mad Petruchio’s wife — if he ever comes and marries her!’”

Tranio tried to comfort them: “Be patient, good Katherina, and Baptista, too. I swear by my life that Petruchio means only the best for you, despite whatever ill fortune is keeping him from keeping his word. Although Petruchio is blunt, I know that he is very wise. Although Petruchio is fond of merry jokes, I know that he is honorable.”

Katherina said, “I wish that I had never seen him!”

Crying, she left. Bianca and some other women followed her.

Baptista said, “Go, girl. I cannot blame you for crying now for such an injury would vex even a saint, so no wonder it vexes a shrew of your hot temper.”

Biondello ran up to Baptista and the others, shouting, “Baptista, I have news. I have old news that you have never heard before!”

“If I have never heard it before, it is new news,” Baptista said. “How is it possible that you have new news and old news?”

“Why, is it not new news to hear of Petruchio’s coming?” Biondello replied.

“Has he come?”

“Why, no, sir.”

“What are you saying, then?”

“He is coming.”

“When will he be here?”

“When he stands where I am and sees you there.”

Tranio interrupted and said, “That is your new news. Now what is your old news?”

“Did I say *old* news? I meant to say *odd* news. Know that Petruchio is wearing lots of old and odd clothes, although he has a new hat. He is wearing an old jacket. He is wearing an old pair of pants that have been turned inside out because they have been worn so much. His boots are so old that they have been used to store pieces of candles — one boot is buckled, and the other boot is laced. He is carrying an old rusty sword taken out of the town-armory — the sword has a broken hilt and lacks a sheath. His garters are broken and do not hold up his stockings.

“His horse has an old moth-eaten saddle and stirrups that do not match. The horse’s bit is broken, and the halter is made out of low-quality sheepskin instead of leather — the sheepskin has often been broken and then repaired with knots. The horse’s girth strap has been repaired six times, and the horse’s crupper — the strap that goes under the horse’s tail and helps to steady the saddle — is made of velvet and bears studs that form the two initials of the woman who used to own it. Here and there packthread has been used to keep the whole setup from falling to pieces.

“As for Petruchio’s horse, it has a dislocated hip, a swollen jaw, and diseases of the mouth. It has a runny nose. It staggers and has tumors on its fetlocks. It has swollen leg-joints and is yellow with jaundice. It has swellings behind the ears and is food for parasites. Its back sags, and a shoulder is dislocated. Finally, it is knock-kneed.”

“Who is coming with Petruchio?” Baptista asked.

“Sir, his lackey, Grumio,” Biondello said. “He is dressed up like the horse. He has a linen stocking on one leg and a woolen stocking on the other. He is using red and blue strips of cloth as his garters. His hat is old, and he has a weird ornament pinned on it instead of the usual feather. He is a monster, a true monster, in his choice of apparel — he is not like a Christian footboy or a gentleman’s lackey.”

Tranio said, “Some odd mood is making Petruchio act and dress like this, although he often dresses badly.”

Baptista said, “I am glad that he has come, howsoever he comes.”

Biondello said, “Why, sir, he comes not.”

“Didn’t you say that he is coming?”

“What? That Petruchio has come?”

“Yes, that Petruchio has come.”

“No, sir,” Biondello said. “I said that his horse is coming, with him on his back.”

“Isn’t that the same thing?” Baptista said.

Biondello sang, “*Nay, by Saint Jamy,*

*“I hold you a penny,*

*“A horse and a man*

*“Are more than one,*

*“And yet not many.”*

Petruchio and Grumio arrived, dressed as Biondello had described them.

“Come, where are these lads?” Petruchio shouted. “Who’s at home?”

“You are welcome, sir,” Baptista said.

“And yet I come not well,” Petruchio replied.

“And yet you do not limp, so you have been well enough to come,” Baptista said.

Tranio said to Petruchio, “If by come not well, you mean that you came here not well dressed, I agree with you. You are not dressed as well as I wish you were.”

“Even if I were better dressed, I would still rush to be here,” Petruchio said. “But where is Kate? Where is my lovely bride? How is my father? Gentlemen, it seems to me that you frown and are displeased. Why is everyone in this worthy group staring at me as if they saw some wondrous omen, some comet bringing a warning of upcoming disaster, or some unusual portent?”

Baptista replied, “Why, sir, you know this is your wedding-day. You have arrived late for your wedding. At first we were sad, fearing you would not come. Now we are sadder because you have come so unprepared for your wedding. Change your clothing. What you are wearing is shameful and a disgrace to someone of your social class. What you are wearing is an eyesore, especially at a wedding!”

Tranio said, “Please tell us what important reason has made you arrive so late for your wedding and made you come here dressed like this? This is unlike yourself.”

“The important reason is tedious to tell and harsh to hear,” Petruchio said.

*This is true, he thought. I am late and badly dressed in order to out-shrew the shrew who will be my wife. She has made others uncomfortable with her shrewishness, and I will make her uncomfortable with my shrewishness. I intend to teach her how she has made other people feel so that she will reform her behavior. Once she has thoroughly learned that lesson, I will cast off my assumed behavior and be a husband whom she can be proud of.*

Petruchio added, “Let it be enough for now that I have come to keep my word to marry Kate even though I have been forced to change part of my plan — as you can see, I did not buy the new clothing I told you that I was planning to buy. When we have more leisure, I will explain myself and excuse my actions so well that you will be happy and satisfied with my explanation. But where is Kate? I have been too long away from her. The morning is passing, and it is time we were at church.”

Tranio said, “Do not see your bride while you are wearing these disrespectful clothes. Go to my bedchamber, and put on some of my clothes.”

“No,” Petruchio said. “Believe me when I tell you that I will visit Kate while I am dressed like this.”

Baptista said, “I trust that you will not marry her while you are dressed in these clothes.”

“Indeed, I will marry her while I am dressed in these clothes,” Petruchio said, “so talk no more about my clothing. She will be married to me — not to my clothes. I can change my clothing easily and make it better. Kate will soon wear out a certain part of my body in bed and if I could soon revive that part of my body — as soon as I can revive your opinion of my clothes by putting on different clothing — it will be good for Kate and better for me. But I am a fool to chat with you when I should bid good morning to my bride, and seal the title with a loving kiss! Very soon, she will bear the title of my wife.”

Petruchio and Grumio exited.

Tranio said, “Petruchio has a reason to be dressed so madly. We will persuade him, if possible, to put on better clothing before he goes to church.”

“I will follow him and see what happens,” Baptista said.

Baptista, Gremio, and everyone except Tranio and Lucentio exited.

Tranio said, “You already have Bianca’s love, but now we need her father’s approval. To get her father’s approval, as I explained previously to you, I must get a man — what kind of man does not matter because we can teach him to act the way he needs to act — to pretend to be your father, Vincentio of Pisa. He will promise Baptista that the dowry for Bianca will consist of even greater sums than I have already promised. That way, you will get your wish and marry sweet Bianca with her father’s consent.”

Lucentio replied, “If my fellow tutor, Litio, were not watching Bianca’s steps so closely, it would be a good idea, I think, for she and I to steal our marriage by eloping. Once the marriage has been performed, let all the world say no. I will keep the wife who is mine, no matter what all the world says.”

“I will look into the possibility of your eloping,” Tranio said. “We will outwit the greybeard Gremio; Bianca’s watchful father, Baptista; and the crafty and amorous musician Litio. All of this we will do for your sake.”

Gremio walked over to Tranio and Lucentio.

Tranio asked, “Signior Gremio, have you come from the church?”

“Yes, and as willingly as I ever came from school.”

“Are the bride and bridegroom returning soon?”

“A bridegroom, you say? He is a groom indeed — he is like the groom who cleans a stable. He is a grumbling groom, and that is something that Katherina is quickly learning. He is even more ill tempered than she is.”

“Even more ill tempered than Katherina?” Tranio said. “That is impossible.”

“Why, he’s a devil, a devil, a very fiend.”

“Why, she’s a devil, a devil, the devil’s dam. She is the mother of the devil.”

“Ha! She’s a lamb, a dove, a harmless innocent compared to him!” Gremio said. “Let tell you, Sir Lucentio, about the wedding. When the priest asked him if he took Katherina as his wife, he replied, ‘Yes, damn it!’ He swore so loudly that the shocked priest dropped the Holy Bible. When he stooped to pick it up, Petruchio — that mad-brained bridegroom — hit him and made the priest and the Holy Bible fall again. Petruchio then said, ‘Now help pick them up, if anyone wants to.’”

“What did Katherina say when the priest rose again?”

“She said nothing,” Gremio replied. “All she did was tremble and shake because Petruchio stamped his feet and swore as if he thought that the vicar meant to cheat him in some way. But after all the religious rites were done, Petruchio called for wine: ‘A toast!’ He acted as if he were on board a ship, carousing with his mates after a storm. He chugged the wine and then threw the dregs in the sexton’s face, giving as his reason that the sexton’s beard grew thinly and seemed to require nourishment to grow thicker. This done, he took his bride, Katherina, about the neck and kissed her lips with such a loud smack that the church echoed. Seeing this, I left because I was embarrassed for Katherina. Coming after me, I know, the whole crowd of guests will soon arrive. Such a mad marriage as this has never been seen before.”

At their church marriage, Petruchio and Katherina had made their vows before God. The vows had come from the 1559 Book of Common Prayer.

Petruchio had vowed before God, “I, Petruchio, take you, Katherina, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, **to love and to cherish**, until death do us part, according to God’s holy ordinance, and I give you my true and faithful word to keep this vow.”

Katherina had vowed before God, “I, Katherina, take you, Petruchio, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, **to love, cherish, and obey**, until death do us part, according to God’s holy ordinance, and I give you my true and faithful word to keep this vow.”

Katherina had seemed to respect the wedding ceremony, and she had made the vow, but she did not seriously take the vow that she had made, as her actions would soon show. She had promised to love, honor, and obey her husband, but very quickly, she would refuse to do those things.

Petruchio had seemed to make a mockery of the wedding ceremony, but he had made the vow, and he seriously took the vows that he and Katherina had made, as his actions would soon show. If he did not love and cherish his wife, he would ignore her and allow her to continue to be a shrew, but he instead would take great pains to improve her character — she would become a wife who seriously took the vow she had made before God.

Gremio said, “Listen! I hear the minstrels playing. The bride, groom, and guests are coming.”

As music played, Petruchio, Katherina, Bianca, Baptista, Hortensio, Grumio, and many other people, including guests, arrived.

Petruchio said, “Gentlemen and friends, I thank you for your pains in preparing this wedding. I know that you think to dine with me today, and I know that you have prepared a great wedding

feast, but I need to leave quickly and so now I mean to take my leave.”

“Is it possible you will go away tonight?” Baptista asked.

“I must go away today, before night comes,” Petruchio said. “Don’t be surprised; if you knew my business, you would beg me to go rather than to stay.”

*This is true, he thought. My business is to tame my shrew of a wife and make her a good wife who will respect the vow she made before God.*

He added, “And, honest company, I thank you all. You have seen me give myself away to this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife. Dine with my father, and drink a toast to me. I must leave, and so I say farewell to you all.”

“Let us entreat you to stay until after dinner,” Tranio said.

“I still must leave,” Petruchio said.

“Let me entreat you,” Gremio said.

“I still must leave,” Petruchio said.

“Let me entreat you,” Katherina said.

“I am content,” Petruchio said.

“Are you content to stay?”

“I am content that you have entreated me to stay, but yet I will not stay, no matter how much you entreat me.”

“If you love me, stay,” Katherina said.

“Gremio, bring my horses,” Petruchio said.

“Yes, sir, they are ready. The oats have eaten the horses.”

“No,” Katherina, who had just minutes ago vowed to obey her husband, said. “Do whatever you will, I will not go today. In fact, I will not go tomorrow. In fact, I will not go until it pleases me. The door is open, sir; there lies your way. Leave now, and you will start your journey with clean boots. As for me, I will not leave until it pleases me to leave. It is likely that you will prove to be an overbearing, surly bridegroom, since you are throwing your weight around so boldly.”

Petruchio said, “Kate, be content. Please, do not be angry.”

“I will be angry,” Katherina said. “What business is it of yours?”

Anticipating an interruption, she said, “Father, be quiet. My husband will wait until I say it is time to leave.”

Gremio anticipated a scene: “Now she’ll get it!”

Katherina said, “Gentlemen, go to the bridal dinner. I see that a woman may be made a fool, if she lacks the spirit to resist.”

Petruchio said, "They shall go to the bridal dinner, Kate, at your command."

He said to the guests, "Obey the bride, all of you who are celebrating her marriage. Go to the feast, revel and riot, carouse in full measure to celebrate the passing of her virginity. Be mad and be merry, or go hang yourselves. But as for my lovely Kate, she must go with me."

He added to the guests, and to Katherina, as he pretended that the guests were going to come between his wife and him, "No, do not defy me. Do not look offended; do not stamp your feet, or stare, or fret. I will be master of what is my own. She is my goods, my moveable possessions; she is my house, my household stuff, my field, my barn, my horse, my ox, my ass, my anything."

Petruchio knew the Bible well, including the Tenth Commandment: "*You shalt not covet your neighbor's house, you shalt not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's.*"

Petruchio said, "Here my wife stands. If anyone dares to touch her, I will bring a legal action against even the proudest man who tries to stop me from leaving Padua and taking my wife with me. Grumio, draw your weapon, for we are beset by thieves. Rescue your mistress, if you are a man."

He pretended that his wife was afraid that the wedding guests were going to keep her from joining her husband: "Fear not, sweet wench. They shall not touch you, Kate. I will shield you against a million like them."

He carried her away as Grumio "protected" them with his drawn but broken sword.

Baptista watched them leave, realized that his daughter had already broken her promise to obey her husband, remembered that he hoped that Petruchio would be the right husband — a husband who could tame her and whom she could respect — for his shrewish daughter, and said, "Let them go. They are certainly a 'quiet' and 'peaceful' couple."

Gremio said, "If they had not left so quickly, I would have died from laughing so much."

"Of all mad matches, this is the maddest," Tranio said.

Lucentio asked Bianca, "What is your opinion of your sister and her marriage?"

"I believe that, being mad herself, she is madly mated."

Gremio said, "In my opinion, Petruchio is Kated. Either they are equally matched, or one of them has met his match. Either way, Petruchio is mated with Kate."

Baptista said, "Neighbors and friends, although the bride and bridegroom will not be eating with us, you know that we have no lack of delicacies at the feast."

He added, "Lucentio, you shall sit in the bridegroom's seat and Bianca shall take her sister's seat."

Tranio asked, "Shall sweet Bianca practice how to bride it?"

"She shall, Lucentio," Baptista replied. "Come, gentlemen, let's go."

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Grumio entered Petruchio's house in Verona and said, "Damn all weak and ill-conditioned horses! Damn all mad masters! Damn all bad roads! Was ever a man as beaten as I am? Was ever a man so dirty? Was ever a man so tired? I have been sent ahead of my master and his wife to make a fire; they will soon be here and will need to warm themselves. I am freezing, although I am a little pot and soon hot — although I am short, I get angry quickly and so warm up. If this were not true, I am so cold that my lips might freeze to my teeth and my tongue might freeze to the roof of my mouth, and my heart might freeze in my chest before I should come by a fire to thaw me. I will warm myself by fanning the embers. It is a good thing that I am short — a taller man than I am would catch cold."

With a voice that quivered because he was shivering, Grumio shouted for a servant, "Curtis!"

Curtis walked into the room and asked, "Who is it who calls so coldly?"

"A piece of ice," Grumio replied, "If you doubt that I am a piece of ice, you may slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a running start than my head and my neck. Start a fire, good Curtis."

"Are my master and his wife coming, Grumio?"

"Yes, Curtis, yes, and therefore start a fire. An old song says, '*Scotland's burning ... Fire, fire! Cast on water,*' but throw no water on this fire because I need it badly to keep from freezing."

Curtis started making a fire in a fireplace.

"Is my master's wife as hot a shrew as she's reported to be?" Curtis asked.

"She was, good Curtis, before this frost," Grumio replied, "but, as you know, winter tames man, woman, and beast. It has tamed my old master and my new mistress and myself, fellow Curtis."

"You may be a beast, but I am not," Curtis said. "Do not call me your fellow since you have just admitted that you are a beast. Go away, you three-inch fool!"

"Is what is mine only three inches long?" Grumio said, "Why, the horn on your head that identifies you as a man with an unfaithful wife is a foot long. What I have between my legs is at least that long. But will you make a fire, or shall I complain about you to our mistress, whose hand, now that she is close at hand, you shall soon feel, to your cold comfort, for being slow in your hot office? Do your job, and make a fire."

"Good Grumio, tell me, how goes the world? What's the news?"

"The world is cold," Grumio said, "for everyone but you, who has the job of making fires, so do your duty, and take what is due to you, because my master and mistress are almost frozen to death. Petruchio and Katherina are, like me, cold."

"The fire is ready," Curtis said. "Therefore, Grumio, tell me the news."

Grumio sang, "*Jack, boy! Ho, boy!*"

Then he added, "Before I can tell you anything, the news must thaw."

"Come, you are so full of trickery! You must be a master at trapping rabbits!"

"Make the fire bigger because I have caught extreme cold," Grumio said. "Where's the cook? Is supper ready? Is the house tidied? Are the rushes strewn on the floor? Are the cobwebs swept away? Are the serving men wearing their new livery and their white stockings? Does every upper servant have his wedding token on? Are all the male and female servants ready and the big and little glasses, too? Are the tablecloths on the tables, and is everything in order?"

"All is ready; and therefore, please, please tell me the news. What happened during your journey?"

"First, know that my horse is tired," Grumio said, "and know that my master and mistress have fallen out."

"How?"

"They have fallen out of their saddles into the dirt; and thereby hangs a tale."

"Let us hear the tale, good Grumio."

"Lend me your ear."

"Here it is," Curtis said, inclining an ear toward Grumio, who hit it.

"You are making me feel a tale, not hear a tale," Curtis said.

"And therefore it is called a sensible tale because you are able to sense it," Grumio said. "I knocked at your ear to wake it up and beg it to listen. Now I begin my tale: *Imprimis* — that is legal talk for 'first of all' — we came down a foul hill, my master, Petruccio, riding behind my mistress, Katherina."

"Were both riding on one horse?"

"What is the difference?"

"Why, the difference of a horse."

"You should tell the tale since you are going to keep interrupting," Grumio said. "If you had not interrupted me, you would have heard how Katherina's horse fell and she fell under her horse. You would have heard in how muddy a place she fell, how she was covered in mud, how he left her with the horse over her, how he beat *me* because *her* horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to pluck him off me, how he swore, how she prayed — this woman who never prayed before — how I cried, how the horses ran away, how her bridle was broken, how I lost my crupper — that strap that goes under the horse's tail and keeps the saddle steady — with many other things worth recording, which now shall die in oblivion due to being untold, resulting in you returning unenlightened to your grave."

"According to your tale, Petruccio is more of a shrew than his wife."

“Yes, he is,” Grumio said, “and you and the proudest of you all shall find that to be true when he comes home. But why am I talking about this? Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop, and the rest. Let their heads be sleekly combed, their servants’ blue coats brushed, and their garters be matched. Let them curtsy with their left legs and not presume to touch a hair of my master’s horse’s tail until they have kissed their master’s and their mistress’ hands in greeting. Are they all ready?”

“They are.”

“Call them forth.”

Curtis shouted, “Did you hear?”

Some servants were eavesdropping.

Curtis shouted, “You must meet my master to countenance — to pay respect to — my mistress.”

“To countenance?” Grumio, who was always willing and happy to deliberately misinterpret words, said. “Why, she has a face of her own.”

“Who does not know that?”

“Apparently, you — you are the one calling for company to countenance her.”

“I call them forth to credit her — to pay respect to her, to honor her,” Curtis said.

“To credit her? Why, she has not come to borrow something from them.”

Some servants entered the room.

Nathaniel said, “Welcome home, Grumio!”

Philip asked, “How are you, Grumio?”

Joseph said, “Hey, Grumio!”

Nicholas said, “Grumio, my friend!”

Nathaniel asked, “How are you, old lad?”

Grumio said to the four servants, “Welcome, you ... how are you now? ... hey, you ... my friend, you.”

Then he added, “So much for my greetings. Now, my fine fellows, is everything ready, and are all things tidy?”

Nathaniel replied, “All things are ready. How near is our master?”

“Very close indeed,” Grumio said. “By this time, he has dismounted. Therefore, you must — quiet! I hear him coming!”

Petruchio and Katherina entered the room. Katherina went directly to the fire.

“Where are these knaves?” Petruchio shouted. “What, no servant at my door to hold my stirrup or to take my horse! Where are Nathaniel, Gregory, Philip?”

Nathaniel said, "Here, sir."

Gregory said, "Here, sir."

Philip said, "Here, sir."

Petruchio shouted, "Here, sir! Here, sir! Here, sir! You logger-headed and unpolished servants! What, you can't be bothered to show up to do your work? You can't be bothered to show respect to me? You can't be bothered to obey me? Will no one do his duty? Where is the foolish knave I sent here before me?"

Grumio replied, "Here I am, sir — I am just as foolish as I was before."

Petruchio shouted at him, "You peasant country bumpkin! You son of a whore! You are as much of a mindless drudge as a horse that turns a treadmill to grind barley to make malt! Didn't I order you to meet me outside and bring along these rascal knaves with you?"

Grumio replied with several ridiculous excuses: "Nathaniel's coat, sir, was not fully made. Gabriel's shoes needed to be repaired. Peter's hat was not darkened because no smoky torch could be found. Walter had not yet found a sheath for his dagger. No one was properly dressed except for Adam, Ralph, and Gregory. All the rest were ragged, old, and beggarly. Yet, dressed as they are, they have come here to meet you."

Petruchio said, "Go, rascals, go, and fetch my supper."

The servants exited.

Petruchio sang, "*Where is the life that late I led —*"

He stopped singing and began to say, "Where are those —"

Then he interrupted himself and said, "Sit down, Kate, and welcome."

He began to bang on the table and shout, "Food! Food! Food! Food!"

The servants arrived with the meal and began to place it on a serving table near the dining table at which Petruchio and Katherina were sitting.

Petruchio shouted at the servants, "Hurry!"

He said to his wife, "Don't look sad, Kate. Be merry."

To the servants, he shouted, "Take off my boots! Hurry!"

Part of Petruchio's plan was to outshrew the shrew and by so doing show her how her shrewish and inconsiderate actions affected other people. This part of his plan was succeeding.

He sang, "*It was the friar of orders grey,*

*"As he walked forth on his way —"*

He shouted at a servant who was trying to pull off one of his boots, "Get out, rogue! You are twisting my ankle! You better do a better job with the other boot! Take that!"

He hit the servant.

He said, "Be merry, Kate."

He shouted, "Bring some water here!"

"Where's Troilus, my cocker spaniel?"

"Get you hence, and order my cousin Ferdinand to come hither. He is one, Kate, whom you must kiss, and be acquainted with."

"Where are my slippers?"

"Bring me some water!"

A servant entered, carrying water.

Petruchio said, "Come, Kate, and wash your hands, and welcome heartily."

The servant dropped the water, and Petruchio shouted, "You son of a whore! You villain! Will you let it fall?"

Petruchio hit the servant who had dropped the water.

"Have patience, please," Katherina said. "He did not do it on purpose."

Katherina was learning about kindness and forgiveness and about feeling sympathy for other people. She was learning how shrewish behavior affected other people.

Petruchio said, "He is the son of a whore! He is a beetle-headed, flap-eared knave!"

He added, "Come, Kate, sit down. I know that you are hungry. Will you give thanks to God, sweet Kate; or else shall I?"

He asked a servant, "What is this? Mutton?"

The servant replied, "Yes."

"Who brought it?"

The servant Peter replied, "I did."

"This mutton is burnt, and so is all the food. What dogs are these servants! Where is the rascal cook? How dare you, villains, bring this food and serve it like this to me who hates burnt mutton and burnt food! Take it away!"

He swept the food and the dishes off the table and shouted, "You heedless joltheads and unmannered slaves! What, are you servants grumbling and complaining? I'll set you straight right away!"

"Please, husband," Katherina said. "The food was fine. You need not be so picky."

"I tell you, Kate, it was burnt and dried up, and I am expressly forbidden to touch it because overcooked food makes people hot-headed and angry. It is better that both of us fast rather than eat it because both of us have quick tempers. Be patient. Tomorrow this fault will be corrected, and we will have good food to eat. Tonight, however, both of us will go without food. Come, I will take you to your bridal chamber."

Petruchio and Katherina exited, and the servants began to talk.

Nathaniel asked, “Peter, did you ever see the like of that?”

“Petruchio is beating her at her game. She is hot-headed, but he is pretending to be even more hot-headed than she is. He is giving her a taste of her own medicine.”

Curtis came into the room.

Grumio asked, “Where is Petruchio?”

Curtis replied, “He is in her bedchamber, talking to her about self-control. In his sermon to her, he shouts, and swears, and scolds, so that she, poor soul, does not know which way to stand, to look, or to speak. She sits dazed as if she has newly awakened from a dream.”

Curtis heard a noise and said, “Let’s go now! I hear Petruchio coming!”

The servants left quickly.

Petruchio walked into the room and started to think out loud:

“I have started my reign with cunning, and I hope that my carefully thought-out plan will succeed.

“We train falcons to obey their masters by keeping them very hungry, and I will keep Kate very hungry. I will not allow her to eat her fill until she fulfills the vow she made before God to love, honor, and obey me.

“To train a hawk, and have it obey the call of her master, the trainer must watch the hawk until it is trained. Untrained hawks will be enraged and will beat their wings in frustration and will not be obedient.

“Kate ate no food today, and I will not allow her to eat tonight. Last night she did not sleep, and tonight I will not allow her to sleep. I pretended to find fault with the food, and I will pretend to find fault with the bed. I will fling the pillow there, I will fling the cushion here, I will fling the coverlet this way, and I will fling the sheets another way.

“While I do these things, I will tell her that everything I do is done in reverend care of her — and that is true, if it gets rid of her shrewishness, as I intend it will.

“Kate shall stay awake all night. And if she begins to nod and go to sleep, I’ll shout and brawl and with the clamor keep her always awake.

“This is a way to kill a wife with kindness.

“By doing these things, I will curb her mad and headstrong shrewishness. Once she is tamed, I will be a proper husband to her. I will love and cherish her. I do, already, although it may not seem like it.

“If anyone knows better how to tame a shrew, I want to hear from him his better way. His telling everyone the secret would be a service to the world.”

Tranio and Hortensio were speaking in front of Baptista's house. Tranio was still disguised as his master, Lucentio, and Hortensio was still disguised as the tutor Litio. Hortensio had been spying on Bianca and was convinced that she and the tutor Cambio — who was really Lucentio in disguise, although Hortensio did not know that — were in love.

Tranio said, "Is it really possible, friend Litio, that Mistress Bianca fancies any one other than me, Lucentio? I tell you, sir, she seems to treat me encouragingly, although you say that she is completely deceiving me. Is she really leading me on?"

"Sir, to satisfy you that what I have said is true," Hortensio replied, "stand hidden here and watch the interaction of tutor Cambio and student Bianca."

Lucentio and Bianca walked into the garden for a lesson.

Lucentio asked, "Bianca, have you learned anything from what you have read?"

"Which book are you reading? Answer me that first," Bianca said.

"I am reading a book whose advice I follow: Ovid's *The Art of Love*."

Lucentio thought, *It is a manual on how to seduce women.*

Bianca said, "I hope that you are a master in that art."

"And I hope that you will prove to be the mistress of my heart!"

Hortensio said, "They are fast learners! What do you think? Do you still think that Bianca loves no one except for you?"

"Bianca's 'love' for me has been deceiving and deceitful," Tranio said. "Women are unfaithful. What I have seen here is incredible, Litio."

Hortensio decided to reveal his true identity: "Be mistaken no more. I am not Litio. I am Hortensio, who disguised myself as a music tutor to be close to Bianca and woo her. But I am ashamed that I have acted in this way. Bianca is not worthy of my wooing her. She prefers a low-born man like Cambio to a gentleman of high birth like me. She loves a peasant. She does not love me."

Tranio replied, "Signior Hortensio, I have often heard that you loved Bianca with all your heart. My eyes are now witnesses of her unworthiness and unfaithfulness. I am ready — like you — to stop wooing Bianca. Do you approve of my decision?"

"Look at how they kiss and court each other!" Hortensio said. "I do approve of your decision. Let's shake on it. Here and now I firmly vow never to woo Bianca — I do give her up because she is unworthy of all the former favors that I have previously given to her."

"And here I take the unfeigned oath that I will never marry her even if she begs me to," Tranio said. "To Hell with her! Look at how unashamedly she pursues him!"

"I wish that everyone would vow not to marry Bianca so that she would be forced to marry her penniless tutor or be an old maid," Hortensio said. "To help ensure that I keep my oath, I will be married to a wealthy widow before three days have passed. This widow has loved me as long as I have loved this proud and disdainful Bianca. And so farewell, Signior Lucentio."

Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, shall win my love, and so I take my leave. I will keep the vow that I have made and you have witnessed.”

He exited.

Tranio, of course, was happy that Hortensio had decided to marry a wealthy widow rather than Bianca. Hortensio was now one less rival suitor to Bianca, and his withdrawal made it more likely that the real Lucentio would succeed in marrying Bianca.

Tranio went over to Lucentio and Bianca and said, “Mistress Bianca, may God bless you with such happiness as belongs to a lover. I have caught you two courting, and both Hortensio and I have sworn not to marry you.”

“Tranio, are you joking?” Bianca said. “Has Hortensio really sworn not to marry me?”

“Bianca, we have both sworn not to marry you.”

Lucentio had figured out that the tutor Litio was really Hortensio in disguise. He said, “Then we are rid of Litio.”

“Yes, you are,” Tranio said. “He said that he will marry a merry widow. He intends to woo and wed her quickly.”

“May God give him joy!” Bianca said.

“Hortensio will tame the widow,” Tranio said.

“He says that he will, Tranio,” Bianca replied.

“Indeed, he has gone to the taming-school.”

“The taming-school?” Bianca said. “Is there really such a place?”

“Yes, there is,” Tranio said, “and Petruchio is the schoolmaster. He teaches the right tricks for taming a shrew and her chattering tongue. Hortensio has gone to visit Petruchio in Verona.”

Lucentio’s other servant, Biondello, arrived and said, “Master, I have been on the lookout so long for a man who will pretend to be your father that I am dog-weary, but at last I have spied a Heaven-sent old man coming down the hill. He is the right kind of man to pretend to be your father.”

“What is he like, Biondello?” Lucentio asked.

“Master, he is a merchant or perhaps a pedant, I do not know for sure, but his clothing, walk, and appearance are like those of a father.”

“What do we do now, Tranio?” Lucentio asked.

“If he is credulous and trusts the tale I will tell him,” Tranio said, “I will make him glad to pretend to be your father, Vincentio, and to make promises to Baptista Minola about the dower that I — while pretending to be you — have promised for Bianca. He will pass as your father. Now you and Bianca go inside and leave me alone to talk to him.”

Lucentio and Bianca went inside.

The old man arrived, walking on the street outside Baptista’s house.

The old man saw Tranio and greeted him, "God bless you, sir!"

Tranio walked over to the old man and said, "And may God bless you, sir! You are welcome. Do you have far to travel, or have you reached your destination?"

"I will stay here for a week or two, but then I will travel farther. I will go to Rome and then to Tripoli, if God permits."

"Where are you from, please?"

"I am from Mantua."

"From Mantua, sir!" Tranio pretended to be shocked. "God forbid! Why have you come to Padua, where your life is in danger?"

"My life is in danger!" the old man said. "That is hard news! Why is my life in danger?"

"It is death for anyone in Mantua to come to Padua," Tranio said. "Don't you know the cause? The Duke of Padua, who is quarreling with the Duke of Mantua, has ordered all Mantuan ships to be detained in Venice. News of the Dukes' quarrel has spread widely. It is a marvel that you have not yet heard about it, but then you are newly arrived in Padua. Otherwise, you would have heard about it."

"This is extremely bad news for me," the old man said. "For I have promissory notes from Florence that I must exchange here for cash."

"Well, sir, I will do you a favor and also give you advice," Tranio said. "First, tell me, have you ever been in Pisa?"

"Yes, sir," the old man said. "I have often been in Pisa, which is renowned for grave and wise citizens."

"Among these grave and wise citizens, do you know a certain Vincentio?"

"I do not know him personally, but I have heard of him," the old man said. "He is a merchant of immense wealth."

"He is my father, sir," Tranio lied, "and, it is true to say, in appearance he somewhat resembles you."

Biondello thought, *Vincentio and this old man resemble each other as much as do an apple and an oyster, but that hardly matters.*

"To save your life in these extremely dangerous circumstances, I will do you a favor for my father's sake. It is fortunate that you resemble Vincentio because you can pretend to be him and assume his name and reputation. You will safely stay in my house. Just be careful to stay in character as my father — that is important. That way, you can stay in Padua until you have finished your business here. If you wish to accept my kind offer, you are welcome to do so."

"Sir, I do accept your kind offer," the old man said. "For ever after, I will consider you the savior of my life and liberty."

"Then go with me and we will put this plan in action," Tranio said. "As we walk, let me give you information. My father is expected here any day now to make a formal agreement about a

dower in marriage — I will be married to one of the daughters of a certain Baptista here. I will teach you what to say and what to do, and I will dress you in clothing that will suit the role you will play.”

— 4.3 —

In a room of Petruchio’s house, a very hungry Katherina was attempting to get the servant Grumio to bring her food. This attempt was doomed to be unsuccessful because Grumio was obeying the instructions of Petruchio, part of whose plan to tame the shrewish Katherina was to keep food away from her.

“No, I will not bring you food,” Grumio said. “If I were to get caught, Petruchio would kill me.”

“The greater the wrong he does to me, the more spiteful Petruchio becomes,” Katherina said. “Did he marry me in order to starve me? Beggars who come to my father’s door and ask for food are immediately given a meal. If they are not, they are given charity elsewhere. But I, who have never learned how to beg, and who have never needed to beg, am starved for lack of food and giddy for lack of sleep. I am kept awake by loud oaths and fed with brawling. And what vexes me more than all these things is that he says that he does these things because he loves me with a perfect love. It is as if he believes that if I should sleep or eat, then I would get a deadly sickness or die immediately. Please go and get me something to eat. I don’t care what you get me, as long as it is wholesome food.”

“What do you say to a cooked calf’s foot?” Grumio asked.

“It is very good. Please let me have it.”

“I fear that it is a food that causes ill temper,” Grumio said. “What do you say to a fat tripe finely broiled?”

“I like it well. Good Grumio, bring me one.”

“I don’t know. I am afraid that it would cause you to be ill tempered. What do you say to a piece of beef and mustard?”

“It is a dish that I love to eat.”

“True, but the mustard is a little too hot.”

“Then bring me the beef without the mustard.”

“No, I will not,” Grumio said. “You shall have mustard, or else you get no beef from Grumio.”

“Then bring me both, or just one of them, or any kind of food at all.”

“Why then, I will bring you the mustard without the beef.”

“Get away from me,” Katherina said, hitting Grumio. “You are a false deluding slave who feeds me only with words and not with food. May God bring sorrow upon you and all the pack of you who triumph and feel glad because I am miserable. Get out!”

Petruchio and Hortensio, who was visiting Petruchio, came into the room. They were carrying food.

“How are you, my Kate?” Petruchio said. “What, sweetie, are you depressed?”

Hortensio asked, “How are you?”

“I am cold because I have met with cold cheer,” Katherina replied.

“Pluck up your spirits, and look cheerfully upon me,” Petruchio said. “Here, love. You can see how diligent I am to fix this food myself and bring it to you. I am sure, sweet Kate, that this kindness merits thanks. What, not a word of thanks? I can see that you do not want this food and therefore I went to all this trouble for nothing. I see that I need to have this food taken away.”

“Please, let the food stay here,” Katherina said.

“The smallest service is repaid with thanks, and so shall my service be repaid before you touch the food.”

“I thank you, sir,” Katherina said.

“Signior Petruchio, you are to blame for Kate’s poor spirits,” Hortensio said. “Come, mistress Kate, I’ll join you for your meal.”

Petruchio was willing for Kate and him to go hungry, but he was not willing for a guest to go hungry, especially when the guest could help him in his plan to tame Katherina.

He whispered, “Do me a favor, Hortensio, and eat all the food. Do not let Kate have any of it.”

Petruchio said loudly, “Hortensio, may your courtesy do your gentle heart good! Kate, eat quickly. My honey love, we will return to your father’s house and enjoy ourselves while dressed as splendidly as the others there. We will have silken coats and hats and golden rings, with ruffs and cuffs and hooped skirts and things, with scarfs and fans and double change of fine clothing, with amber bracelets, beads, and lots of other girly things.”

As Petruchio talked, Hortensio ate most of the food. Kate got very little — Petruchio and Hortensio made sure of that.

Petruchio said, “Are you finished eating? The tailor is waiting for you. He will adorn your body with his finery and ruffles.”

The tailor entered the room, and Petruchio said, “Come, tailor, let us see these ornaments. Let us see the dress that you have made. Lay it out so we can see it.”

A hat maker also entered the room, and Petruchio asked, “What business have you here?”

The hat maker replied, “Here is the hat your worship ordered.”

Petruchio looked at the hat and pretended to dislike it.

He said, “Why, this was molded on a porridge bowl! It is a velvet dish! It is cheap and nasty! Why, it is a mollusk shell or a walnut shell. It is a knick-knack, a trifle, a piece of nonsense, a baby’s hat. Take it away! Come, let me have a bigger hat!”

Katherina said, “I will have no bigger hat. This size is fashionable, and gentlewomen wear such hats as these.”

Petruchio replied, "When you are gentle, you shall have one, too — but not until then."

Hortensio thought, *That will not be any time soon.*

Katherina said, "Why, sir, I trust I may have permission to speak, and speak I will. I am no child. I am no babe. Your betters have endured hearing me say my mind, and if you cannot endure it, it is best that you stop your ears. My tongue will tell the anger that is in my heart — if I keep that anger hidden, my heart will break. Rather than have it break, I will speak as freely as I want, even if what I have to say is extreme."

Petruchio pretended that Katherina had agreed with him that the hat was bad: "Why, what you say is true. This is a paltry hat, a custard-coffin — a crust for a custard — a bauble, a silken meat pie. I love you and your taste in hats — you hate this hat."

"Whether you love me or love me not, I like the hat. And I will have it, or I will have none."

Petruchio motioned for the hat maker to leave, and the hat maker obeyed.

The tailor had laid out the dress for inspection.

Petruchio said, "Let us look at the dress. Tailor, show it to us."

Petruchio looked at the dress and pretended not to like it: "Have mercy, God! What kind of fancy dress is this? What's this? A sleeve? It is like a small cannon. I see that you have pricked it open all over like an apple-tart. Here's a snip and a nip and a cut and a slish and a slash — these holes resemble an incense-burner with a perforated top in a barber's shop. Why, what in the devil's name, tailor, do you call this?"

Hortensio thought, *I can see that Kate is also not likely to have a new dress.*

"You wanted me to make the dress properly and well, according to the fashion of this time," the tailor said.

"So I did," Petruchio said, "but if you remembered, I did not order you to spoil it for all time. Leave here and pass every street gutter as you hop off to your home. For you shall hop off without any business from me, sir. I want none of the clothing you make. Go now! Take this dress and do whatever you want with it!"

Katherina said to Petruchio, "I have never seen a better-fashioned dress. I have never seen a dress that is more elegant, more pleasing, or more commendable. Are you trying to make a puppet — an easily manipulated doll — out of me?"

Petruchio pretended that she was talking about the tailor: "Why, that is true; the tailor is trying to make a puppet out of you."

The tailor replied, "She says that *you* intend to make a puppet out of her."

"Oh, monstrous arrogance!" Petruchio said. "You lie, you thread, you thimble — you are a yard, three-quarters of a yard, a half-yard, a quarter of a yard, one-sixteenth of a yard! You are a flea, a nit, a thin-legged insect! Am I to be defied in my own house by a spool of thread? Get out, you rag, you fragment, you remnant, or I shall so beat you with your yardstick that for the rest of your life you will think twice before prattling on this way. I tell you that you have ruined her dress."

“You are deceived,” the tailor said. “The dress has been made according to the order given to my boss. Grumio gave us the order about how it should be done.”

“I gave him no order; I gave him the fabric,” Grumio said.

“But how did you want the dress to be made?” the tailor asked.

“Sir, with needle and thread,” Grumio replied.

“But did you not request that the fabric be cut?”

“You have bedecked many things, haven’t you?” Grumio asked.

“Yes, I have decorated many dresses with trimmings,” the tailor said.

“Well, do not try to bedeck me. I will not be decked in a fight,” Grumio said, “no matter how many men you have decked. I will not stand for it! I asked your boss to cut out the dress, but I did not ask him to cut it to pieces; therefore, you lie.”

“I have right here the written order for the dress,” the tailor said. “It tells in what fashion the dress should be made.”

“Read it out loud,” Petruccio ordered.

“The note lies if it says that I ordered the dress to be cut to pieces,” Grumio said.

The tailor read out loud, “*First, a loose-bodied dress —*”

Grumio objected, “A loose-bodied dress! That is a dress for a woman with a loose body — a loose woman! Master, if ever I said loose-bodied dress, sew me in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a bobbin of brown thread. I said a dress, not a loose-bodied dress.”

“Proceed,” Petruccio ordered.

The tailor read, “*With a small compassed cape.*”

“I confess that I ordered the cape,” Grumio said.

“*With a wide sleeve,*” the tailor read.

“I confess that I ordered two sleeves,” Grumio said.

“The sleeves elaborately cut,” the tailor read.

“There is the villainy — there is the problem,” Petruccio said.

“There is an error in the order, sir,” Grumio said. “I ordered that the sleeves should be cut out and then sewed up again. I will prove it in combat even though the tailor arms his little finger with a thimble.”

“Everything that I have read is true,” the tailor said. “If I had you in the right place — a court of law — the judge would agree with me, and not with you.”

“I am ready to fight you now,” Grumio said. “You take the order form, I will take your yardstick, and let us fight each other without mercy. You have no need to hold back when you fight me.”

“May God have mercy,” Hortensio said. “The tailor won’t have a chance if he is armed only with a piece of paper.”

“Well, sir, in brief, the dress is not for me,” Petruchio said to the tailor. “I do not want it.”

“You are in the right, sir,” Grumio said. “It is for my mistress — your wife.”

“Take the dress back to your boss and let him do what he wants with it,” Petruchio said to the tailor. “Take it away for your master’s use.”

“Isn’t that dirty?” Grumio asked.

“What do you mean?” Petruchio asked.

“You want this tailor to take away the dress for his master’s use. That sounds like you want him to take the dress off a woman so that his master can use her,” Grumio replied. “I am shocked!”

Petruchio ignored Grumio’s coarse jesting and whispered, “Hortensio, say that you will see that the tailor will be paid.”

To the tailor, Petruchio said, “Go and take the dress away. Be gone, and say no more.”

Hortensio whispered to the tailor, “Do not worry. I’ll pay you for the dress tomorrow. Do not be offended by Petruchio’s rash and inconsiderate words. Go now, and send my regards to your boss.”

The tailor exited.

Petruchio said, “Well, come, my Kate; we will go to your father’s house wearing these respectable everyday clothes. Our purses shall be rich because we have not spent our money, and our garments will be poor. Our minds are more important than our bodies, and a rich mind will adorn the body. Just like the Sun breaks through the darkest clouds, honor can be seen through the meanest clothing. Is the loudly chattering blue jay more precious than the beautifully singing but plainly adorned morning lark because its feathers are more beautiful? Or is the poisonous adder better than the tasty eel because its patterned skin pleases the eye? Of course not, good Kate. And you are not the worse for this poor and mean clothing. If you consider your clothing to be shameful, blame it on me. I believe that quality of character is all and quality of clothing is nothing. And therefore let us be merry. We will leave immediately and go to your father’s house to feast and be entertained.”

He ordered a servant, “Go, call my men, and let us go straight to Kate’s father. Bring our horses to the end of Long Lane. We will walk there and mount our horses. Let’s see, I think it is now around seven o’clock, and we will probably arrive at Kate’s father’s house by dinnertime.”

“I do assure you, sir, that it is almost two o’clock,” Katherina said. “And it will be suppertime before we arrive there.”

Petruchio replied, “It shall be seven or I will not mount my horse. Look, Kate, whatever I speak, or do, or think to do, you are always saying that I am wrong.”

He told his servants, “Forget it. I will not go to Kate’s father’s house today; and before I do, it shall be whatever o’clock I say it is.”

Hortensio thought, *Why, Petruchio intends to command the Sun to be whatever o'clock he says it is.*

— 4.4 —

Tranio and the old man, who was now dressed like Vincentio, Lucentio's father, talked together in front of Baptista's house. The old man was wearing boots and was bareheaded to make it seem as if he had just arrived from a journey.

Tranio said, "Sir, this is Baptista's house. Do you want me to ring his bell?"

"Of course, what else?" the old man said. "But unless I am deceived, Signior Baptista may remember me. Nearly twenty years ago, in Genoa, we met when we were lodgers at the Pegasus Inn."

"All will be well," Tranio said. "Keep in character no matter what happens. Be sure to have the gravitas that a father should have."

"I will," the old man said.

Biondello arrived.

The old man said, "But, sir, here comes your servant. It is a good idea for him to know what we are doing."

"Do not worry about him," Tranio said.

He added, "Biondello, now do your duty thoroughly, I advise you. Pretend that this man is the real Vincentio."

"I will. Don't worry," Biondello said.

"Did you take my message to Baptista?" Tranio asked.

"I told him that your father was at Venice, and that you expected him to arrive today in Padua."

"You are a good fellow," Tranio said. "Here, take this money and buy yourself a drink later."

He looked up and said, "Here comes Baptista. Old man, get ready."

Baptista and Lucentio walked over to Tranio, the old man, and Biondello.

Tranio said, "Signior Baptista, you are happily met."

He said to the old man who was pretending to be Lucentio's father, "Sir, this is the gentleman I told you about. I hope that you will be a good father to me now. Give me Bianca as and for my inheritance."

"Steady, son!" the old man said.

To Baptista, the old man said, "Sir, by your leave. I have come to Padua to collect some debts, and my son Lucentio has told me about an important matter: Your daughter and he love each other. Because of the good reports that I have heard about you and because my son loves your daughter and she loves him, I am willing, as a loving father should be, to allow my son to be married right away. If you like this match of your daughter and my son as much as I do, then

we can come to a financial agreement and together consent to this marriage. I will not try to drive a hard bargain with you, Baptista — I have heard many good things about you.”

“Sir, pardon me for what I have to say,” Baptista said. “Your plain-spokenness and your brevity well please me. It is true that your son Lucentio here loves my daughter and she loves him — or both are putting on quite an act! Therefore, as long as you assure me that like a good father who wants his son to be happy you will give my daughter a sufficient dower, the match is made and all is done. Your son shall marry my daughter with my consent.”

“I thank you, sir,” Tranio said. “Where then do you know that your daughter and I can best be formally engaged and the proper financial agreements be drawn up?”

“Not in my house, Lucentio,” Baptista said, “for, you know, pitchers have ears, and I have many servants. Besides, old Gremio is always listening so perhaps we may be interrupted.”

“Then we will do these things at my lodging, if it pleases you,” Tranio said. “There, my father is staying; and there, this night, we will settle this business privately and well. Send for your daughter by your servant Cambio here. My servant Biondello shall fetch the notary at once to write out the financial agreements. The worst thing is that with so little notice, you are likely to have a thin and slender meal at my lodging.”

“That is fine,” Baptista said. “Cambio, go to my home and tell Bianca to get herself ready immediately. Please tell her what has happened: Lucentio’s father has arrived in Padua, and she is likely to become Lucentio’s wife.”

Lucentio, disguised as Cambio, exited. As he did, Tranio winked at him and laughed.

“I pray to the gods that she will become Lucentio’s wife with all my heart!” Biondello said.

“Dally not with the gods, but leave now,” Tranio said.

Biondello exited. He had a message that Tranio wanted him to give to Lucentio.

Tranio said, “Signior Baptista, shall I lead the way? Welcome! A single course will most likely be all the food you receive at my lodging here, but we will do better in Pisa.”

“I will follow you,” Baptista said.

Tranio, the old man, and Baptista exited.

Biondello, meanwhile, shouted, “Cambio!”

Lucentio, still disguised as Cambio, walked over to him and said, “What do you want, Biondello?”

“Did you see my master wink and laugh?”

“Yes, Biondello, but what of that?”

“In themselves, nothing, but he has left me here behind to tell you the meaning of his wink and laugh.”

“Please tell me their meaning.”

“Baptista is safely away from you; he is talking with the pretend father of a pretend son.”

“What about him?”

“You are supposed to bring his daughter to the supper.”

“And what of it?”

“The old priest of Saint Luke’s church is on duty at all hours.”

“And what does this have to do with me?”

“While Baptista is busy with Tranio and the old man, why not rush things a little to make sure that you get the girl and she is yours forever? Take her to the church, gather about you the priest, clerk, and some honest witnesses, and do what people do at weddings. If this is not what you want, then I have no more to say except that you ought to tell Bianca farewell for forever and a day.”

“Listen, Biondello —”

“I cannot tarry,” Biondello said. “But I can tell you that I knew a woman who was married one afternoon as she went to the garden to get parsley to stuff a rabbit. You may do much the same thing, sir, and so goodbye, sir. My master the pretend Lucentio has ordered me to go to Saint Luke’s and tell the priest to be ready to marry you when you come with the woman who will complete you.”

Biondello left.

Lucentio said, “I may do this, and I will do this, if it pleases Bianca. But she will definitely be pleased, so why should I worry about what I should do? Whatever will be will be. I will go to Bianca and ask her to marry me now. It would be embarrassing if I showed up at the church alone.”

— 4.5 —

Petruchio, Katherina, Hortensio, Grumio, and some servants were traveling on the road to Padua to go to Katherina’s father’s house.

Katherina was thinking:

*I have a decision to make. Do I allow myself to be tamed, or do I continue to resist obeying my husband, Petruchio?*

*Or, better, do I tame myself?*

*If I am tamed through the use of hunger and lack of sleep, I am no better than an animal, a hawk that a trainer tames. If I am tamed, I will obey my husband, but I will do so without love and without honoring him. He will not get the wife he wants, and I will no longer be Katherina. I will have no spirit.*

*If I tame myself, I do what I have decided to do. The hunger and exhaustion do not determine what I shall do, although they make it clear that I need to make a decision. If I tame myself, and if I keep the vow that I made before God, I will love, honor, and obey my husband. I will still be Katherina, and I will still have spirit.*

*Should I tame myself? Has being a shrew made me happy?*

*I have tied up and beaten my own sister because she would not tell me which of her suitors she liked best. She said that she had no preference. I did not believe her.*

*Is that the kind of person I want to be? Is that the kind of person God wants me to be? No.*

*And is that the kind of wife that Petruchio wants me to be? No.*

*What kind of husband do I want Petruchio to be? Do I want him to be a husband who ignores me? No. Do I want him to be the kind of husband who will tolerate a shrewish wife? No. I need a husband I can respect, a husband who has as much spirit as I have.*

*I have learned how shrewish behavior affects other people. It is not pleasant to witness. I have learned to consider the feelings of other people — now I have empathy for other people and do not want to see them harshly criticized for minor faults or for things that are mostly or entirely out of their control.*

*If anyone needs to be tamed, I do. I need to decide whether I should now tame myself.*

*If I tame myself, how will I benefit? I will be a better person, and most likely, I will get a better husband. Is Petruchio a bad husband? Does he always act like this? Will he continue to act like this if I tame myself? I doubt it. It is obvious that he seriously takes the vow I made before God — to love, honor, and obey my husband. I think that he seriously takes the vow he made before God — to love and cherish his wife. If he had no intention of keeping his vow, he would ignore me and allow me to remain a shrew. Instead, he is going to great lengths to be married to a good wife. Also, what he does to me he is doing to himself. I am hungry, and I can look at him and see that he has lost weight. I sleep very little, and he sleeps very little so that he can ensure that I stay awake. He treats his wife as he treats himself.*

*But am I his wife? Are we husband and wife? Not yet. Not really. We have not consummated the marriage. I respect that in him. He is not a rapist. He will not sleep with me and consummate the marriage until I am the wife he wants and until I truly embrace a Christian marriage.*

*So, I have a decision to make: To be a shrew, or not to be a shrew?*

Petruchio said, “So now we are on the way toward our father’s house. Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the Moon!”

Katherina said, “The Moon! It is the Sun that is shining: It is not Moonlight now.”

“I say it is the Moon that shines so bright,” Petruchio replied.

“I know it is the Sun that shines so bright,” Katherina said.

“Now, by my mother’s son, and that’s myself,” Petruchio said, “it shall be Moon, or Sun, or whatever I say it is before I journey to your father’s house. It is time for us to turn our horses around and return home. You contradict me and contradict me and contradict me.”

Hortensio said to Katherina, “Say what he wants you to say, or we shall never go to Padua.”

Katherina thought, *I have made my decision.*

“Let us go forward, please, since we have come so far,” Katherina said. “And let it be Moon, or Sun, or whatever you please. If you want to call it a poor and dimly lit candle, henceforth I

vow it shall be so for me.”

“I say it is the Moon,” Petruchio said.

“I know it is the Moon,” Katherina replied.

“Nay, then you lie: It is the blessed Sun.”

“Then, God be blessed, it is the blessed Sun. But Sun it is not, when you say it is not. And the Moon changes even as your mind. What you will have it named, that is what it is; and so it shall be so for Katherina.”

*Petruchio thought, Husbands and wives should be able to speak plainly to each other. The Moon changes from New Moon to Full Moon, and Katherina said that my mind changes like the Moon changes. Katherina knows that the Sun is the Sun. She is obeying me, but she knows what reality is and she is letting me know that she knows. Lunatics are also supposed to be adversely affected by the Moon, which is Luna in Latin. Katherina is implying that I am acting like a lunatic. To be honest, the things that I have been doing are things that a lunatic would do — except that I have a very good reason for doing them. Katherina is still spirited, but Katherina is a better Katherina, and I like it. And very soon I intend to stop acting like a lunatic.*

Hortensio whispered to Petruchio, “You have won. You have tamed the shrew.”

Petruchio said, “Well, let us go forward, then. This is the way that things should be. The bowling ball should curve naturally and make a strike and not curve unnaturally and go into the gutter.”

He thought, *Katherina is behaving as she ought to behave.*

He saw someone coming and said, “Look, we are about to have some company.”

Lucentio’s real father, Vincentio, walked toward them. He was an old man.

Petruchio said to him, “Good morning, young mistress. Where are you headed?”

He added, “Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly, too. Have you ever seen a more youthful gentlewoman? White and red compete within her cheeks! What stars spangle Heaven with as much beauty as those two eyes that beautify her Heavenly face?”

He said to Vincentio, “Fair lovely maiden, once more good morning to you.”

He added, “Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty’s sake.”

Hortensio thought, *He will make this old man mad by pretending that this old man is a young woman.*

Katherina hugged Vincentio and said, “Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet, to where are you going and where do you live? Happy are the parents of so fair a child as you, and even happier will be the man to whom a happy fate will allot you to be his wife and his lovely bed-fellow!”

Petruchio thought, *Kate has out-done me. When we first met, we had a battle of wits and I narrowly defeated her. Now we are having a contest of wits — a game of wits — and she has*

*defeated me by being funnier than me. This is the new Katherina — the spirited but faithful-to-her-marriage-vow Katherina. I have never been so happy to be defeated in my life.*

*When a wife is obedient, that does not mean that she is a slave. A husband and a wife should work toward the same goals and not oppose each other. Those goals should be worthy. I admit that much of what I am requiring Katherina to do is silly, but I want that to stop soon. As soon as I know that both of us — not just me — are taking our marriage vows seriously, I will stop this silliness, and Katherina and I will work toward worthy goals.*

*A husband is supposed to love and cherish his wife. That means to treat her with respect and affection and tenderness. And according to 1 Peter 3:7, a husband must honor his wife: “Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”*

*According to Proverbs 31:10, the worth of a virtuous woman is far above the worth of rubies.*

He said, “Why, Kate! I hope that you are not mad. This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, and withered. He is not a maiden, as you said he is.”

“Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes,” Katherina said, “that have been so bedazzled by the Sun” — she glanced at Petruchio to see whether the Sun was still the Sun; it was — “that everything I look on seems young. Now I see that you are a reverend father. Pardon me, please, for my mad mistaking.”

Katherina smiled at Petruchio, who thought, *Katherina has learned to play and to be funny.*

“Do, good old grandsire,” Petruchio said, “let us know which way you are travelling. If you travel along with us, we shall be happy to have your company.”

“Fair sir, and you my merry mistress, your greeting of me has much amazed me. But my name is Vincentio; I live in Pisa; and I am traveling to Padua to visit a son of mine, whom I have not seen for a long time.”

“What is his name?” Petruchio asked.

“Lucentio, gentle sir.”

“Then happily have we met,” Petruchio said, “and happily for your son. And now by law, as well as because of your old age, I am entitled to call you my loving father. By this time, your son has married the sister of my wife, who just now greeted you, and so we are related. Do not be amazed or worried. The woman whom your son married is of good reputation, her dowry is rich, and she is of good birth. In addition, she has many good qualities that the wife of a noble gentleman ought to have. Let me hug you, and we will travel together to see your noble son, who will rejoice when you arrive.”

“Is all this true?” Vincentio said. “Or is this another of the jokes that you play on travellers? You seem to enjoy playing jokes.”

“I do assure you, father,” Hortensio said, “that what he has said is true.”

“Come with us and see for yourself that what I have said is true,” Petruchio said. “I can understand that the way we first greeted you has made you wary.”

Vincentio joined the travelers.

Hortensio thought, *This has been an interesting trip. I have seen how Petruchio tamed the shrew. If the widow I will soon marry turns out to be a shrew, I know exactly what to do.*

Both Petruchio and Katherina thought, *I hope that we get to Baptista's house soon — I'm starving.*

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

Gremio stood in front of Lucentio's house. He did not see Biondello, Lucentio, and Bianca, who were further down the street. Lucentio was no longer disguised as Cambio.

Biondello said, "Let us move quietly and swiftly, sir; the priest is ready."

Lucentio said, "I am hurrying, Biondello, but they may need you at home so leave us and go home."

"Not yet," Biondello said. "I will go with you to the church, and then I will return to the house as quickly as I can."

Biondello, Lucentio, and Bianca left to go to the church.

"I wonder why Cambio is not here," Gremio said.

Petruchio, Katherina, Vincentio, Grumio, and some servants now arrived and went to Lucentio's house.

Petruchio said to Vincentio, "Sir, here's the door; this is Lucentio's house. My father-in-law Baptista's house is closer to the marketplace. There I must go, and so here I leave you, sir."

"You shall have a drink before you go," Vincentio said. "I think that any friend of mine will be welcomed here, and in all likelihood, some good refreshments are to be expected."

He knocked on the door.

Gremio said, "They are all busy inside; you better knock louder."

The old man who was pretending to be Vincentio looked out of a window and asked, "Who is knocking as if he would like to beat down the door?"

Vincentio asked, "Is Signior Lucentio within, sir?"

"He's inside, sir, but he is too busy to speak to anyone."

Vincentio, who had brought money to give to his son, asked, "What if a man was bringing him a hundred pounds or two, for him to spend as he wishes? Is he still too busy to talk to me?"

The old man replied, "Keep your hundred pounds to yourself: Lucentio shall not lack money as long as I live."

Petruchio said to Vincentio, "See, I told you that your son is well beloved in Padua."

Petruchio said to the old man, "Listen, sir. To make matters clear, please tell Signior Lucentio that his father has come from Pisa and is here at the door and wants to speak with him."

The old man was worried. He was pretending to be Vincentio, and here before him was the real Vincentio! He decided to continue to pretend to be Vincentio: "You lie! His father has already come from Padua and he is here and is looking out the window."

"Are you Lucentio's father?" Vincentio asked.

“Yes, sir,” the old man said. “So his mother says, if I may believe her.”

Petruchio said to the real Vincentio, “Why, what are you doing! This is outright knavery — you have taken another man’s name and are pretending to be him.”

The old man at the window said, “Lay hands on the villain and arrest him. I believe that he intends to cheat somebody in this city while pretending to be me.”

Biondello arrived.

He thought, *I have seen Lucentio and Bianca in the church together. May God bless them! But who is here? He is my old master: Vincentio! Now our plans are undone and brought to ruin!*

Vincentio saw Biondello, recognized him, and said, “Come here, you rope-stretcher! Your neck was made to fit a hangman’s noose!”

Biondello decided to brazen it out and said, “You are not the boss of me.”

“Come here, you rogue,” Vincentio said. “What, have you forgotten me?”

“Forgotten you!” Biondello replied. “No, sir. I could not forget you because I have never seen you before in all my life.”

“What, you notorious villain, have you never seen your master’s father, Vincentio?”

“The father of my master? Yes, indeed, sir. I see him right now — he is looking out of the window.”

“Is that so!” Vincentio said. He hit Biondello.

Biondello shouted, “Help, help, help! This is a madman who wants to murder me!”

He ran away.

The old man who was pretending to be Vincentio shouted, “Help, son! Help, Signior Baptista!”

The old man withdrew from the window.

Petruchio said, “Kate, let’s stay here and see what happens.”

They withdrew a little to a spot where they could still see what happened.

The old man who was playing Vincentio walked onto the street. So did Tranio, Baptista, and some servants.

Tranio recognized Vincentio and decided to try to brazen it out. He said, “Sir, who are you to presume to beat my servant?”

“Who am I!” Vincentio cried. “Who are you? Oh, my God! You are a fine villain! Look at what you are wearing! A silk jacket! Velvet stockings! A scarlet cloak! And a fancy hat! The work I have done is undone! While I carefully manage my money at home, my son and my servant spend all I have at the university!”

Tranio said to Vincentio, “What’s the matter with you?”

“Is this man a lunatic?” Baptista asked.

Tranio said to Vincentio, "Sir, you seem to be a respectable old gentleman judging by your clothing, but your words show that you are a madman. Why, sir, what concern is it of yours if I wear pearls and gold? I thank my good father, with whose help I am able to buy my fine clothing."

"With the help of your father!" Vincentio said. "Villain! Your father is a sail maker in Bergamo."

"You are mistaken, sir," Baptista said. "You are definitely mistaken, sir. What do you think is this man's name?"

"What is his name?" Vincentio said. "I know his name! I have brought him up ever since he was three years old, and his name is Tranio."

The old man who was pretending to be Vincentio said, "Away, away, mad ass! This man's name is Lucentio, and he is my only son and the only heir to the lands of me, Signior Vincentio."

"You think that his name is Lucentio!" Vincentio said. "Oh, he must have murdered his master! I order you in the Duke's name to lay hold of him and arrest him. Oh, my son, my son!"

He said to Tranio, "Tell me, villain, where is my son, Lucentio?"

"Bring a police officer here," Tranio ordered.

A servant arrived with a police officer, and Tranio said, "Carry this mad knave to prison. Father Baptista, we must see that this man is brought to trial."

"Carry me to prison!" Vincentio exclaimed.

Gremio said, "Wait, officer. This man shall not go to prison."

"Be quiet, Gremio," Baptista said. "I say that he shall go to prison."

"Be careful, Signior Baptista, lest you be tricked in this business," Gremio said. "I dare to swear that this man is the right Vincentio."

"Swear, if you dare," the old man pretending to be Vincentio said.

Gremio backtracked and said, "No, I dare not swear it."

"Are you willing to say that I am not Lucentio?" Tranio asked.

"No, I know that you are Lucentio," Gremio replied.

Baptista said about the real Vincentio, "Away with the dotard! Take him to prison!"

"In Padua, strangers are harassed and abused," Vincentio said. "This is monstrous!"

Biondello arrived with Lucentio and Bianca. Biondello had told them about the situation they would face.

"We are ruined and — there he is," Biondello said. "Deny that he is the real Vincentio or else we are all ruined!"

Lucentio did not deny his father.

Instead, he kneeled before him — and made Bianca also kneel — and said, “Pardon me, sweet father.”

“Is my sweet son still alive?” Vincentio said. He had truly been afraid that Tranio and Biondello had murdered his son so that they could steal his identity and his money and his possessions.

Seeing and hearing this, Biondello, Tranio, and the old man who had pretended to be Vincentio ran away as quickly as they could.

Bianca said, “Pardon me, dear father.”

Baptista asked her, “How have you offended me? Where is Lucentio?”

Baptista meant Tranio, who had run away, but the real Lucentio said, “Here I am. I am the real Lucentio, the real son to this man, the real Vincentio. I have married your daughter, Bianca, and have made her mine. I did that while you were blinded by counterfeits who pretended to be me and my father.”

“Here is a conspiracy, with no mistake,” Gremio said. “They have deceived us all!”

“Where is that damned villain Tranio?” Vincentio asked. “I have not forgotten how he badly treated and defied me.”

Still puzzled, Baptista asked, “Why, is not this man Cambio?”

Bianca replied, “Cambio is really Lucentio.”

“Love resulted in these miracles,” Lucentio said. “My love for Bianca made me give my identity to Tranio. He became a master, and I became a servant. He pretended to be me here in Padua. But finally and happily I have arrived at the wished-for haven of my bliss by marrying Bianca. What Tranio did, I myself forced him to do, so pardon him, sweet father, for my sake.”

Vincentio said, “I’ll slit the villain’s nose — he would have sent me to prison!”

Baptista said to Lucentio, “Listen, and answer me. Have you married my daughter without my consent?”

Vincentio replied for his son, “Do not worry, Baptista. We will make you happy with the dower we will give Bianca. Let us go inside and make everything right.”

Baptista followed him inside the house, saying, “We need to get to the bottom of all this and fix it.”

Lucentio said, “Don’t look pale, Bianca. My father will give you a good dower, and your father will not frown at you.”

Gremio said, “My attempt to be married has utterly failed, but I will go inside with everybody else. I hope to be invited to the wedding and get a share of the feast.”

Katherina said, “Husband, let’s follow all the others and see the end of this ado.”

“First kiss me, Kate, and we will.”

“What, kiss you in the middle of the street?”

Petruchio smiled and said gently, “What, are you ashamed of me?”

“No, sir, God forbid that, but I am ashamed to kiss you in the street.”

“Why, then let’s go home again. Come, let us leave now.”

“No, I will give you a kiss.”

She gave him a quick kiss and said, “Now, please, my love, let us follow the others.”

“Is not this good?” Petruchio said. “Come, my sweet Kate. Better once — at some time — than never, for never is too late to mend. Better late than never, and better late than later.”

— 5.2 —

In Lucentio’s house, everyone was celebrating the marriage of Lucentio and Bianca. Many people were present, including Baptista, Vincentio, Gremio, Petruchio and Katherina, Hortensio and the widow he had married, Lucentio and Bianca, Biondello, and Grumio. Vincentio had decided not to severely punish Tranio, who was now bringing in dessert.

Lucentio said, “At last, though after a long time, our jarring notes are in harmony, and it is time, now that the raging war is done, to smile at escapes and dangers that have passed.

“My fair Bianca, bid my father welcome, while I with the same courtesy welcome your father.

“Brother Petruchio, sister Katherina, and you, Hortensio, with your loving widow, feast with your best appetite, and welcome to my house.

“This dessert will finish the meal that began with our great good reception at Baptista’s house. Please, everyone, sit down. We now sit to chat as well as eat.”

Petruchio, who had been stuffing himself — so had Katherina — said, “We do nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!”

Baptista said, “Padua is famous for this kind of hospitality, son Petruchio.”

“Padua contains everything that is kind,” Petruchio replied.

Hortensio said, “For both our sakes, I wish that word ‘kind’ were true.”

“Now, by my life,” Petruchio said, “Hortensio fears his widow. He wishes that his widow were kind.”

Not quite hearing, the widow replied, “Did you say that my husband frightens me? Believe me when I say that I am not afraid of him.”

“That is sensible,” Petruchio said, “but you did not hear me correctly. I meant that Hortensio is afraid of you.”

The widow replied, “He who is giddy thinks the world turns round.”

Petruchio joked, “Roundly — that is, smartly — replied.”

Katherina, however, did not like what the widow had said. If a giddy man thinks that the world turns round, then a man who is afraid of his wife thinks that other men are afraid of their wives. Why would a man be afraid of his wife? Because his wife is a shrew.

She asked the widow, “What do you mean by your comment that ‘he who is giddy thinks the world turns round’?”

The widow replied, “I mean what I conceive by your husband and his comment about Hortensio.”

“Conceive by Kate’s husband?” Petruchio said. “Why, that is me! How do you, Hortensio, like your wife’s conceiving by me? Shall you soon hear the pitter-patter of little feet?”

“My wife means that she conceived what she believes by hearing your comment,” Hortensio said.

“Very well interpreted, Hortensio,” Petruchio said. “Kiss him for that, good widow.”

Katherina repeated, “‘He who is giddy thinks the world turns round.’ Please, tell me what you meant by that.”

The widow, who well knew Katherina’s reputation as a shrew, replied, “Your husband, being troubled with a shrew, projects his own trouble onto my husband, and now you know my meaning.”

“It is a very mean — a very contemptible — meaning,” Katherina said.

“Yes, it is mean,” the widow said. “I mean you.”

“I am mean indeed — when it comes to you,” Katherina said.

“Catfight! You tell her, Kate!” Petruchio said.

“You tell her, widow!” Hortensio said.

“I bet a hundred marks that my Kate defeats the widow,” Petruchio said. “My Kate will put her down.”

“That’s my job,” Hortensio said. “I will put the widow down on her back and do what husbands do.”

“That is your office, and so you are an officer,” Petruchio said. “Let me drink to you.”

He drank.

Baptista asked Gremio, “How do you like these quick-witted folks?”

“Believe me, sir, they like to butt their heads together.”

“Head and butt!” Bianca said. “A quick-witted person would say that those butt-heads are likely to have heads with horns — cuckolds’ horns.”

“Ah, mistress bride,” Vincentio said, “Has that awakened you?”

“Yes, it has awakened me, but it has not frightened me,” Bianca replied. “Therefore, I’ll go to sleep again.”

“No,” Petruchio said. “Don’t go back to sleep. Since you have awakened and made a jest, I will target you with a shrewd jest or two of my own.”

“Am I your target? Am I a bird that you are hunting?” Bianca asked. “I will move my bush and go to another bush; if you want, you can follow me and draw your bow. Please pardon me.”

Bianca, Katherina, and the widow went into another room, leaving the men behind.

“She has forestalled me,” Petruchio said. “Signior Tranio, Bianca is the bird you aimed at, although you did not hit her, and therefore let us drink to all who shot at her and missed.”

Tranio replied, “I acted like a greyhound that Lucentio had freed from the leash. I ran after Bianca but made sure that Lucentio got the catch.”

“That is a good swift simile,” Petruchio said, “but something currish — pun definitely intended.”

Tranio said, “It is good, sir, that you did your own hunting, but it is thought that your deer — that is, dear — holds you at bay. Does she wear the pants in your family?”

“Petruchio!” Baptista said. “Tranio got you!”

Lucentio said, “Thank you for that jest, good Tranio.”

“Confess,” Hortensio said. “Hasn’t Tranio hit his target?”

“It is a notable quip, I agree,” Petruchio said. “However, although it hit its target, it bounced off me and ten to one it hit one of you and stuck there.”

“Seriously,” Baptista said, “I know my daughter Katherina, and good Petruchio, I think you have the most thoroughgoing shrew of anyone here.”

“Well, I say that I don’t,” Petruchio said. “But let’s put it to the test. Let each of us send for his wife, and he whose wife is the most obedient and comes quickest when he sends for her shall win the wager that we will propose.”

“Good idea,” Hortensio said. “What wager will we make?”

Lucentio said, “Twenty crowns.”

“Twenty crowns!” Petruchio said. “I’ll venture that much on my hawk or hound, but twenty times that much on my wife.”

“Make it a hundred crowns,” Lucentio said.

“Agreed,” Hortensio said.

“Agreed,” Petruchio said. “We have made our bet.”

“Who will go first?” Hortensio asked.

“I will,” Lucentio replied.

He ordered, “Biondello, go to Bianca and ask her to come to me.”

“I will,” Biondello said, exiting.

“Son, I will assume half of your bet,” Baptista said to Lucentio.

“No, I will take all the risk and all the profit for myself,” Lucentio said. “I am sure that Bianca will come.”

Biondello came back, alone.

“What happened?” Lucentio asked.

“Sir, my mistress sends you word that she is busy and she cannot come,” Biondello replied.

Petruchio laughed and said, “What! She is busy and she cannot come! Is that the answer you were expecting?”

Gremio said, “At least it is a polite answer. You better pray to God that your own wife will not send you a worse one.”

“I expect to receive a better answer,” Petruchio said.

Hortensio said, “Biondello, go and entreat my wife to come to me immediately.”

Petruchio said, “‘Entreat’? Once she hears that, your widow must come, I suppose.”

Hortensio said, “I am afraid, sir, that no matter what you do, your own wife will not come to you when asked.”

Biondello came back, alone.

“Now, where’s my wife?” Hortensio said.

“She says that you have some kind of practical joke in mind, and so she will not come. She told me to tell you to come to her,” Biondello said.

“Worse and worse; she will not come! Oh, such a reply is vile, intolerable, and not to be endured!” Petruchio said. “Grumio, go to your mistress and tell her that I command her to come to me.”

Grumio exited.

Hortensio said, “I know what your wife’s answer will be.”

“What?”

“She will not come.”

“Then the fouler fortune is mine, and that’s all there is to it.”

Baptista looked up and said, “I don’t believe it! Katherina is coming!”

Katherina asked Petruchio, “What may I do for you?”

“Where are your sister and Hortensio’s wife?”

“They are sitting and talking by the parlor fire.”

“Bring them here,” Petruchio said. “If they say that they will not come, force them to come here to their husbands. Go and bring them here right away.”

Katherina exited to get Bianca and the widow.

Lucentio said, “This is a wonder, if anyone wants to talk about a wonder.”

“And so it is,” Hortensio said. “I wonder what will be the result of it.”

Petruchio said, “The result will be a peaceful and loving and quiet life. We will have a Christian marriage, based on the rightful and proper authority of and love by a husband who earns respect and obedience and honor and love from his wife. To be short, our marriage will be all that is sweet and happy. Both she and I will take our marriage vows — the same marriage vows that all Christian husbands and wives make — seriously.”

“Good fortune has fallen on you, Petruchio,” Baptista said. “You have won the wager, and in addition to the money that you have won from Lucentio and Hortensio, I will give you twenty thousand crowns. This is an additional dowry for an additional daughter. The old Katherina is gone. Katherina is still a spirited Katherina, but she is a better Katherina.”

“I am not done yet,” Petruchio said. “I will demonstrate even better than I have that I have won the wager by displaying to better advantage Katherina’s new virtue and obedience. Look. She is coming now and is bringing the disobedient wives. She has made them come although they did not want to.”

Katherina had Bianca and the widow each by an arm, and she led them over to their husbands.

Petruchio said, “Katherina, your hat does not flatter you. It is a mere bauble. Throw it on the floor.”

Katherina threw her hat on the floor.

The widow said, “God, I hope that I never see any troubles until *after* I act silly like that!”

“Do you men call this *silly* action a wife’s *duty*?” Bianca asked.

“I wish that your duty was as ‘silly,’” Lucentio said. “Your conception of a wife’s duty to her husband, fair Bianca, has cost me a hundred crowns since suppertime.”

“The more fool you, for betting on my duty,” Bianca said.

Petruchio said, “Katherina, please tell these headstrong women what duty they owe to their Lords and husbands.”

“You’re joking,” the widow said. “We will listen to no lectures.”

“Speak, Katherina,” Petruchio said, “and begin with the widow. Tell her what is her duty to her husband.”

“She shall not,” the widow said.

“I say that she shall,” Petruchio said, “and I insist that my wife begin by telling you your duty to your husband.”

Katherina thought about what the Bible says about a wife’s duty to her husband:

“*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*” — Ephesians 5:22

“*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.*” — Ephesians 5:23

*“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be [that is, submit] to their own husbands in everything.” — Ephesians 5:24*

She also thought about what the Bible says about a husband’s duty to his wife:

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;” — Ephesians 5:25*

*“Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” — 1 Peter 3:7*

*“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” — 1 Timothy 5:8*

And, of course, she thought about this verse:

*“Nevertheless let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” — Ephesians 5:33*

Katherina then gave a spirited defense of Christian marriage. She said to the widow, “Shame on you! Stop scowling! Unknit that threatening unkind brow, and stop darting scornful glances from those eyes to wound your Lord, your King, your Governor — your husband! Your scowls and frowns blot your beauty as frosts do stain the meadows. They destroy your reputation the way that whirlwinds shake fair buds, and in no sense are your scowls and frowns appropriate or amiable.”

Then Katherina began to talk to both the widow and Bianca:

“An ill-tempered woman is like a troubled and agitated fountain: muddy, ill-seeming, thick, and robbed of beauty. And while the fountain is like that, no one — no matter how dry or thirsty he is — will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.

“Your husband is your Lord, your life, your keeper, your head, your King; he is the one who cares for you, and to be able to take good care of you he commits his body to painful labor both by sea and land. He stays awake during storms at sea and during cold weather by day while you are lying warm at home, secure and safe. Your husband craves no other tribute at your hands but love, fair looks, and true obedience; this is too little payment for so great a debt.

“Such duty as the subject owes the Prince is what a wife owes to her husband, and when she is perverse, peevish, sullen, sour, and not obedient to his honest and honorable will, what is she but a foul and willful rebel and graceless traitor to her loving Lord?

“I am ashamed that women are so simple-minded as to offer war when and where they should kneel for peace — or to seek for rule, supremacy, and sway, when they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

“Why are our bodies made so soft and weak and smooth, unfitted to toil and trouble in the world, except for the reason that our soft conditions and our hearts should well agree with our external parts?

“Come, you perverse and incapable worms — you disobedient wives! My mind has been as big and proud as one of yours. My courage has been as great, and my intelligence and character perhaps even more suited than yours to shoot forth insulting words and shoot forth frowns. But now I see that our lances are only straws. Our strength is weak, and our weakness is past comparison. When wives wear the pants in the family, wives are at their worst and weakest.

“So suppress your pride, which is of no use to you. Metaphorically place your hands below your husband’s foot. To show my husband that I am loyal to him, I am willing to do that literally as well as metaphorically, if he should ever want me to.”

“Why, there’s a wife!” Petruchio said. “Come on, and kiss me, Kate.”

They kissed for real, lips on lips.

Lucentio said, “Well done and congratulations, old pal. You have won the bet, and you have won a good wife.”

Vincentio said, “It is good news when one’s children are well behaved and obedient.”

Lucentio said glumly, “But it is bad news when women and wives are badly behaved and disobedient.”

“Come, Kate, we will go to bed,” Petruchio said. “We three couples are all married, but I predict that two of the marriages will have problems.”

He said to Lucentio, who had married Bianca, whose name means white, “It was I who won the wager, though you won the white. Now that I am a winner, may God give you a good night!”

Petruchio and Katherina left to consummate their marriage.

Hortensio said, “Well, Petruchio, run along. You have tamed a curst shrew.”

Lucentio said, “It is a wonder, if you don’t mind my saying so, that she allowed herself to be tamed.”

## **AFTERWORD**

As he took his bows at the end of the play, the actor playing Christopher Sly thought, *I am glad that this is a play. Obviously, we can learn about Christian marriage from this play, but anyone who wants to do in real life what Petruchio does in this play is a complete and utter idiot.*

In writing the above paragraph, I do not think that I am going against Shakespeare. I believe that the major purpose of the Christopher Sly introduction is to strongly tell the audience that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a play. What better way to emphasize that than to make *The Taming of the Shrew* a play within a play? The appearance of the actor playing Christopher Sly during the curtain call is another strong reminder that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a play. When the actor playing Christopher Sly appears during the curtain call, the male audience members should be thinking, “I have just seen a theatrical comedy. I better not try to imitate Petruchio at home!”

By the way, according to Wikipedia (“Marriage Vows”), “On September 12, 1922, the Episcopal Church voted to remove the word ‘obey’ from the bride’s section of wedding vows.”

## ***CHAPTER XI: Twelfth Night***

### ***PREFACE***

In Shakespeare's time, Twelfth Night was the night before Twelfth Day, the final day of the twelve days of Christmas. The First Day of Christmas is December 25, Christmas Day, and so Twelfth Day is January 5, which is the eve of Epiphany: January 6. According to tradition, Jesus was born on December 25, and the Visit of the Magi — the Three Wise Men from the East visiting the newly born Jesus and giving him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh — occurred on January 6. Twelfth Night is a festive time and is full of merry-making and the playing of practical jokes. As you would expect, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is a comedy.

### ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

#### **Main Male Characters**

ORSINO, Duke of Illyria.

SEBASTIAN, Brother to Viola.

ANTONIO, a Sea Captain, Friend to Sebastian.

A Sea Captain, Friend to Viola.

VALENTINE & CURIO: Gentlemen attending on the Duke.

SIR TOBY BELCH, Uncle to Olivia.

SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK.

MALVOLIO, Steward to Olivia.

FABIAN, Servant to Olivia.

FESTE, a Clown: Servant to Olivia.

#### **Main Female Characters**

OLIVIA, a rich Countess.

VIOLA, in love with the Duke.

MARIA, Olivia's Serving-woman.

#### **Other Characters**

Lords, Priests, Sailors, Officers, Musicians, and other Attendants.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

Duke Orsino, his attendant Curio, and some lords were in the Duke's palace in Illyria, which is located northwest of Greece. Musicians were playing.

Orsino said, "If music be the food of love, play on. Continue to play music until I grow sick of music, so that, having suffered from an excess, my appetite for love will sicken and then die."

He paused to listen to the music and then said, "Play that melody again! It has a languishing descent that sounded so sad. It passed over my ears like the sweet sound made by a gentle breeze that breathes upon a bed of violets and takes the scent of violets and carries it afar. That's enough. No more of that melody. It is not as sweet now as it was before."

He added, "Spirit of love, how lively and refreshing are you. Your capacity for receiving passions is as enormous as the sea's capacity for receiving tributary streams, yet everything that enters into you, of whatever strength and from whatever height, falls into diminishing value and a low price, even within a minute. Love is so full of constantly changing images that it alone is supremely imaginative and nothing can compare to it. Love can be strange. I am in love, and yet I want to be out of love. I wanted to listen to music, and then I did not want to listen to music."

An impartial observer could very well think, *The one thing Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, does love consistently is the idea of love itself. He is more in love with the idea of love than he is in love with the Countess Olivia, whom he says he loves. This is why he wanted to hear this love song.*

Duke Orsino's attendant Curio did not take Orsino's lovesickness seriously. He asked, "Will you go hunting, sir?"

"Hunting what, Curio?"

"The hart: a stag."

"Why, yes, I do go hunting," Orsino replied. "I go hunting for a heart, the noblest that I have: my own. When my eyes did first see Olivia, I thought that she purged the air of pestilence and plague! In that instant, I was turned into a hart like Actaeon was when he did first see Diana. Diana, a virgin goddess, was bathing naked and was not happy to be seen. To punish Actaeon, she turned him into a hart, and his hunting dogs pursued him and tore him into pieces. Ever since I saw Olivia, my desire for her pursues me and hunts me like savage and cruel hounds."

Valentine, another of Orsino's attendants, entered the room. Orsino had sent him to tell Olivia of Orsino's love for her.

Orsino said to him, "What news have you brought me about Olivia?"

"Sir, she would not admit me into her home and let me talk to her. But I do bring you the message that I received from Maria, her personal servant: 'For the next seven years, Olivia will not display her face to the open air. It shall always be veiled. She will be like a nun cloistered from the world. Once a day, her salt tears will water her chamber. The salt in her tears will

season and keep fresh her love for her dead brother, whom she wishes to remember clearly and forever.”

Orsino said, “Olivia has a sensitive heart because she will pay this debt of love to someone who was only a brother — someone she is related to by birth. She will love even more when Cupid’s golden arrow — the arrow that causes people to fall in love — hits her and she loves only me, forgetting all her other loves. When that happens, her mind and heart and soul will be given to one person, and she will take a husband. Now I will go to my garden and see sweet beds of flowers. Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers. A shady and flowery garden is a good place to think about love.”

— 1.2 —

On the shore of the Adriatic Sea on the coast of Illyria, the noblewoman Viola, as well as a sea captain and some sailors, had just landed after surviving a storm at sea that had sunk their ship.

Viola asked, “What country, friends, is this?”

The captain replied, “This is Illyria, lady.”

Viola said, “I wonder what I should do now. My twin brother has almost certainly drowned and is in Elysium, the good part of the afterworld. But perhaps my brother did not drown. What do you think, sailors?”

The captain replied, “It is only by great good fortune that you yourself did not drown.”

“And since I was saved, perhaps my poor brother was also saved.”

“True, madam,” the captain said. “Here is some comfort for you. I can assure you that when our ship split in two and sank and you and the few others here who survived held onto our drifting ship, I saw your brother acting bravely and resourcefully during such a dangerous time. He tied himself to a floating mast. I saw him keeping himself from drowning for as long as I could see him. He rode on the mast like Arion rode on the dolphin that had listened to his music and saved him when he was in danger of drowning after being captured by pirates. The dolphin carried Arion to land, and the mast may keep your brother alive until he can reach land.”

“Thank you for saying such reassuring words to me,” Viola said.

She handed him some money and said, “There is gold for you. My own escape from drowning gives me hope that my brother is still alive, and so do your words — words from someone who knows the sea well.”

She added, “Do you know this country of Illyria well?”

“Yes, madam, I do know it well,” the captain replied. “I was born and raised not three hours’ travel from this very place.”

“Who governs here?”

“A noble duke,” the captain said. “He is noble both in nature and in name.”

“What is his name?”

“Orsino.”

“Orsino!” Viola said. “I have heard my father talk about him. He was a bachelor at that time.”

“He is still a bachelor,” the captain said. “Or at least he was a bachelor until very recently — I have been gone from Illyria for a month. At that time, the gossip was — as you know, the common people gossip about the nobles — that he was seeking the love of fair Olivia.”

“Who is she?”

“She is a virtuous maiden, the daughter of a Count who died a year ago, leaving her in the protection of his son, her brother, who shortly afterward died. Because of her love for her brother and her grief over his death, people say that she has decided to shun the company and the sight of men.”

“I would like to be employed by that lady and not reveal who I am to the world until I know more certainly what my position and standing in life will be here. I must be cautious because I am a woman in a strange land.”

“It will be difficult or impossible to get a position with Countess Olivia,” the captain said, “because she has shut herself away and will not listen to any kind of request, not even Duke Orsino’s.”

“You seem to look and act like a good person, captain. Although some people have an appearance of goodness that hides evil, I believe that your mind suits your fair and outward character. Therefore, I ask you to — and I will pay you well — conceal my identity and aid me as I assume another identity for the time being. I intend to become an employee of Duke Orsino. You shall tell him that I am a eunuch — a castrated male. This will be a win-win-win situation for you, the Duke, and me. I will be a competent employee, and you will get the credit for bringing me to the Duke’s attention. I do have talents. I can sing and play musical instruments, and I will provide good value to the Duke. What happens after I enter his employ, only time will tell. But please keep quiet about my identity until I reveal who I really am.”

The captain replied, “Go ahead and pretend to be a eunuch, and I will pretend to be a man who is mute and unable to reveal your identity. If I should ever tell your secret, may I go blind.”

“Thank you. Now please lead me to Duke Orsino.”

*Viola thought, Of course, I may need to alter my plan according to circumstances. If I pretend to be a eunuch, that will explain my lack of beard and my high voice as I sing songs. But if, for some reason, it is not a good idea to pretend to be a eunuch — for example, if Duke Orsino is tired of music — then I can pretend to be a youth who as of yet is incapable of growing a beard. As a young woman, I can manage to assume that identity.*

— 1.3 —

In Olivia’s house, Olivia’s personal servant, Maria, and Olivia’s alcoholic uncle, Sir Toby Belch, who was staying with Olivia for a while, were talking.

“Why the Devil is my niece so heavily grieving the death of her brother?” Sir Toby Belch said. “Why does she want to mourn him and to stay away from men for the next seven years? I am sure that grief is an enemy to life.”

Sir Toby Belch may have been correct in his opinion of excessive grief, but he was a Hell-raiser and a partier and a lover of the drinking of alcohol and the spending of money — especially other people’s money. Maria, the personal servant of Olivia, had been sent to Sir Toby to try to convince him to keep regular hours and to party less.

“I swear, Sir Toby, you must start coming home and going to bed earlier. Olivia dislikes your late hours. She takes great exception to them.”

“If she wants to except something, then let her make an exception of me,” Sir Toby replied.

“You must engage in moderate and orderly conduct. Confine yourself — and your drinking — within reasonable limits.”

“Confine? The only thing that I will confine myself in is my clothing! These clothes are good enough to drink in, and so are these boots! If my boots are not good enough to drink in, then they can hang themselves by their own bootstraps.”

“Your chugging and drinking will be your downfall. I heard Olivia talk about your drinking yesterday, and I heard her talk about a foolish knight you brought here to woo her and to try to marry her.”

“Who? Sir Andrew Aguecheek?”

“Yes, him.”

“He is as brave a man as any man in Illyria.”

“So what?”

“He’s rich. He has an income of three thousand ducats a year.”

“True, but he will keep his wealth for only a year. He is a fool and a spendthrift.”

“You should not say that,” Sir Toby said. “He plays cello, and he speaks three or four languages from memory without having to hold a translating dictionary in his hands, and he has all the good gifts of nature.”

“He is a natural, all right,” Maria said. “He is a natural fool — if not an idiot. In addition, he is a great quarreler. Fortunately, he also has the gift of being a coward. If not for this gift of retreating from those whom he has angered, all wise and prudent people think that he would quickly receive the gift of a grave.”

“The people who say those things are scoundrels and gossip-mongers. Who are these people?”

“These people are those who add that he and you get drunk together each night.”

“We get drunk from drinking to the health of my niece, Olivia. I’ll drink to her as long as I have a throat and Illyria has alcohol. Anyone who will not drink to Olivia’s health until his brain spins like a top is a coward and a knave.”

Seeing Sir Andrew coming, Sir Toby said to Maria, “Heads-up. Speaking of the Devil, here comes Sir Andrew Agueface now.”

Sir Andrew, who was tall and thin, entered the room and said, “Sir Toby Belch! How are you, Sir Toby?”

“Sweet Sir Andrew! I am well.”

To Maria, a very small and very short woman, Sir Andrew said, “Hello, fair shrew.”

Unfortunately for Sir Anthony, “shrew” has more than one meaning. He was thinking of a very small mammal, but Maria thought of an evil-tempered woman.

Maria instantly disliked Sir Andrew and instantly realized that all the rumors about him being a fool were true. She had no interest in him, but she would be polite — make that somewhat polite — to him because she was Olivia’s personal servant.

She replied, “Hello to you, too, sir.”

“Offense,” Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew. “Take the offense.”

“What are you talking about?” Sir Andrew asked.

“I am talking about this woman, my niece’s personal servant.”

“Ms. Offense,” Sir Andrew said to Maria, “I hope to know you better.”

Maria’s nickname was Mary, so she said, “My name is Mary, sir.”

“That’s a good name: Mary Offense —”

Sir Toby said, “You are mistaken, Sir Andrew. Her name is not ‘Offense.’ I meant for you to take the offense, to mount an attack, and to conquer this woman. Imagine that you are a pirate attacking a ship.”

Sir Toby was more than willing to get Sir Andrew to do and say stupid things and expose himself as a fool. Sir Toby knew that Maria’s wit was more than adequate to defend herself against whatever offense Sir Andrew would attempt to mount.

“I am not willing to mount this woman,” Sir Andrew said. “Heaven forbid that I should mount an attack on a woman!”

Disgusted, Maria said, “Fare you well, gentlemen. I am leaving now.”

Sir Toby, “If you let her go so easily and with such a weak offense, you may never have the opportunity to draw your sword again.”

Maria smiled faintly. She knew the part of a man’s body that Sir Toby was referring to as a “sword.”

Sir Andrew said to Maria, “If you leave now, I may never have the opportunity to draw a sword again.”

Maria laughed at him.

Sir Andrew did not know why she laughed. He asked, “Do you think that you have fools at hand?”

Maria replied, “Sir, I am not holding your hand.”

“But you will,” Sir Andrew said, and he grabbed and held her hand.

Maria thought, *And now I have a fool at hand.* She noticed that Sir Andrew's hand was dry like the hand of an old and sexually impotent man.

She said to Sir Andrew, "Whenever a man asks me if he is a fool, I say, 'Thought is free.' But I also think that you should do something to make your hand wet. Bring your hand to the buttery bar and let it drink."

She brought Sir Andrew's hand to just in front of his crotch and thought, *If you smear butter on your hand, it will not be dry. Masturbation ought to make your hand wet and your bar buttery.*

"Why, sweetheart? I don't understand," Sir Andrew said.

"Your hand is dry, sir."

"Yes, it is," Sir Andrew said. "I am not such an ass that I cannot keep my hand dry. Are you making a joke?"

"If I am, it is a dry joke. I have a dry sense of humor."

"Are you full of jokes?"

"I have a joke at the ends of my fingers," Maria said.

She let go of Sir Andrew's hand and said, "Now that I am no longer holding your hand, I no longer have a joke at the ends of my fingers."

She left the room.

Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew, "You need a drink. I have never seen a man so badly defeated by a woman. She really put you down. Have you ever been so put down before?"

"Only when I am put down by too much wine and take up residence under a table," Sir Andrew said. "Sometimes I think that I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has, but I eat a lot of beef and I think that the fat clogs my brain."

"No doubt about it," Sir Toby sympathized.

"If I believed that, I'd avoid red meat," Sir Andrew replied.

He added, "I am going to leave here tomorrow and go back to my home."

"*Pourquoi*, my dear knight?"

*Pourquoi?* means "Why?" in French, but Sir Andrew did not know that.

"What does *pourquoi* mean? To leave or not to leave? I wish that I had spent more time learning languages instead of fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting — I love to see savage dogs torment bears! I should have sought an education! I should have been able to curl my tongue around more languages!"

Sir Toby thought, *When I said that Sir Andrew knows three or four languages, I exaggerated. No, I didn't exaggerate — I lied.*

Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew, "If you had learned additional languages, then you would now have an excellent head of hair."

“How would learning more languages improve my hair?”

“A curling-tong would curl it. You can see that your hair is straight.”

“My hair is attractive enough as it is, isn’t it?”

“Your hair is excellent,” Sir Toby said. “It looks like flax being spun straight by a housewife. If the housewife wanted to, she could spin your hair away and then you would be bald. And if the housewife were also a prostitute, she could give you syphilis and then your hair would fall out.”

“Ugh,” Sir Andrew said. “I am going home tomorrow, Sir Toby. I am here to court your niece, but she will not allow me to see her. Even if I could see her, the odds are four to one against her marrying me; after all, the Duke of Illyria himself wants to marry her.”

“Olivia does not want to marry Orsino,” Sir Toby said, “She will not marry anyone above her in wealth, age, or intelligence. I have heard her swear it. Don’t worry. You still have a chance to marry her. Where there’s life, there’s hope.”

“I will stay a month longer,” Sir Andrew decided. “I can change my mind very quickly. I delight in masquerades with music and dancing and I delight in partying — sometimes all at the same time.”

“Are you good at dancing?”

“I am as good as any man in Illyria, whoever he is, as long as his social standing is not above mine. Still, it is true that I am not as good as an old man who is experienced at dancing.”

“Can you dance a lively five-stepped dance?”

“I can cut a caper.”

“And I can cut the mutton to go with your caper,” Sir Andrew said, thinking of the little peppery berries — capers — that are often served with mutton.

“I can also dance backwards.”

“Why are you hiding these talents of yours?” Sir Toby asked. “It is like you have put curtains in front of them to keep the dust off the way we put curtains in front of paintings to protect them. Why don’t you dance on your way to church, and after church is over dance a different dance on your way back home? If I were you, I would dance instead of walk. I would dance even while going to a bathroom. I would dance a sink-a-pace — oops, I mean the French dance called *cinqupace* — up to a sink and then I would pee in it. What do you mean by hiding your talent for dancing? Is this the kind of world you ought to hide virtues in? When I saw your legs, I immediately knew that you were born to dance.”

“Yes, my legs are strong,” Sir Andrew said, “and they look good in stockings. Shall we do some reveling?”

“What else?” Sir Toby said. “Weren’t both of us born under the astrological sign of Taurus?”

“Doesn’t Taurus rule the sides and heart?”

“No, sir, it rules the legs and thighs,” Sir Toby said.

Actually, Taurus is supposed to rule the neck and throat. Sir Andrew got it wrong through ignorance. Sir Toby got it wrong so he could laugh at Sir Andrew.

Sir Toby said, "Let me see you dance a caper."

Sir Andrew began dancing.

"That's it! Move your knees higher! Higher!"

— 1.4 —

Viola had put her plan in action. She had dressed in male clothing and was now working for Duke Orsino. However, she had abandoned the idea of being a eunuch and instead simply called herself a youth — a youth by the name of Cesario. Now she was in Duke Orsino's palace talking with one of his assistants: Valentine.

Valentine said, "If the Duke continues to show favor to you, Cesario, you are likely to advance far and quickly. He has known you only three days, and already he treats you as a favorite and not as a stranger."

Viola, who was dressed in male clothing, said, "You say 'if.' You must either fear that Orsino will change his mind about me or that I will neglect my duties and so he may no longer show favor to me. Does he quickly change his opinion about people?"

"No, he does not," Valentine said. "You have my word on that."

"Thank you. I see him coming now."

Duke Orsino, his attendant Curio, and others entered the room.

"Has anyone seen Cesario?" Orsino asked.

"Here I am, and at your service," Viola said.

Orsino said to Valentine, Curio, and the others, "Stand at a distance for a while. I want to speak to Cesario privately."

He then said to Viola, "You know no less than everything about me. I have even told you my secrets. You know whom I love: Olivia. Therefore, go to her. Do not allow yourself to be denied to see her. Stand at her door, and tell the servants at her doors that your feet are fixed there and you will not leave until you have seen and talked to Olivia."

"My noble lord," Viola said, "if Olivia is much in sorrow and in grieving for her dead brother, as I have heard, it is likely that she will not allow me to see her."

"Insist on it. Act like a jerk if you have to, but be sure to see her before you return to my palace."

"Suppose I am able to speak to her, sir. What do you want me to tell her?"

"Tell her about my passionate love for her," Orsino said. "Overwhelm her with stories about me that will capture her heart. You are the proper messenger for this. She will pay more attention to you, a youth, than she would to an older messenger."

"I doubt that, sir," Viola said.

“Youth, believe it,” Orsino replied. “Anyone who calls you a man is mistaken. You are not yet old enough to be a man. Your lips are as smooth and as ruby-red as the lips of the virgin goddess Diana. Your boyish voice is like the voice of a maiden, high and unbroken. Everything about you is feminine. I know that you are the right messenger and have the right personality for this affair.”

Orsino said to his attendants, “Four or five of you go with Cesario on his errand — no, all of you go with him. I like it best when I am alone.”

He said to Viola, “If you perform this errand well, you will prosper. You shall live as well as I do with all of my resources.”

Viola replied, “I’ll do my best to woo the lady and make her yours.”

But she thought, *This is a disagreeable errand. I will be wooing a woman for Orsino to make his wife, but I have fallen in love with him and I want the woman he marries to be me!*

— 1.5 —

Maria, who had recently used her wits to reveal the foolishness of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, was in Olivia’s house talking to a person of wit and intelligence. This person was Feste, a jester who made his living by making other people laugh. Some people called him a clown, and some people called him a fool. He was funny like so many clowns are, and he was wise like so many “fools” are. He served Olivia and occasionally picked up tips at other people’s houses, and he had been away from Olivia’s house for a long time.

Maria said to Feste, “Either tell me where you have been for so long, or I will not utter a word in your defense. You have been away for so long that Olivia is likely to have you hanged.”

Both Maria and Feste knew that this was an exaggeration. But if Olivia really would be angry enough to want to have Feste hanged, her face would be an angry red.

Feste replied, “Let her hang me: he that is well hanged in this world need fear no colors.”

Maria smiled. She knew that “well hanged” meant “well hung.”

She said, “Explain what you mean by ‘fear no colors.’”

“A hung man is a dead man, and he will see no colors.”

“That is a good Lenten answer, Feste. Lent is a time of fasting, and your answer lacks substance. You have made a lame joke with no meat on it.”

She added, “I can tell you where the saying ‘I fear no colors’ comes from.”

“From where, Mistress Mary?” Feste asked.

“From the wars,” Maria said. “Soldiers wear colored uniforms, and they march under a colored flag. Someone who fears no colors is not afraid of the enemy. When you face Olivia, who will be angry because of your long absence, you will be facing the enemy, and you better hope that you fear no colors.”

“Well, may God give more wisdom to those who already have it. As for those who are fools, let them use whatever talents they have.”

“As I said, you will be hanged because you have been absent for so long,” Maria said, “or you will be fired and lack employment. Won’t that be the same as a hanging to you?”

Feste said, “Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.”

Maria smiled. She knew the proverb “Better be half hanged than ill married.” She also thought that a man’s being well hung might be advantageous in keeping a wife happy.

Feste added, “As for being fired, it is summer and that will make unemployment bearable.”

“You are resolute not to tell me where you have been?”

“Not necessarily,” Feste said, “but I am braced to make two points.”

“Those two points are the places where your braces — your suspenders — are attached to buttons so they can keep your pants up. If only one point suffers a mishap and the button comes off, the other point will keep your pants up. But if you lose both buttons, you will also lose your pants.”

“Well jested,” Feste said. “Go about your business now, but let me say that if Sir Toby would stop drinking, he would realize that you are as witty as any daughter of Eve in Illyria. He might even realize that just as Eve became Adam’s wife, you could be a clever wife for him.”

Maria replied, “Hold your tongue. I don’t want to hear any more of that. Look. Here comes Olivia. You had better come up with a good way to explain to her why you have been absent for so long.”

Maria left the room as Olivia and Malvolio, Olivia’s dignified and dutiful steward, entered it. Malvolio was not the type of person to take a long authorized leave of absence the way that Feste had. A few other male servants also entered the room.

Feste thought to himself, *I need to be witty so that Olivia will cease her anger at me for being away for so long. If I can make her laugh, I won’t get fired.*

He said to himself, being sure that he spoke loud enough for Olivia to overhear him, “Wit, if it be thy will, make me funny. Just as ancient epic poets invoked the Muses and asked them for help in telling their tales, I am invoking Wit and asking it for inspiration. Many wits who think that they are witty very often prove to be fools. I am sure that I lack wit, and since I am aware of what I lack, I may pass for a wise man, just as Socrates did. What does the great philosopher Kungfooey say? ‘Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit!’”

He looked at Olivia and said, “God bless thee, lady!”

She was not happy with him. She said, “Take the fool away.”

Feste said, “Didn’t you hear her, fellows? Take away the lady.”

“Go away,” Olivia said. “I want nothing more to do with you. For one thing, you have grown unreliable. A major part of success is simply showing up, and you have not been doing that recently. Apparently, your wit has dried up. You, Feste, are a dry fool.”

“You have mentioned two faults, lady, that drink and good advice can mend,” Feste replied. “Give a dry fool a drink, and he will no longer be dry. Bid a man with chronic absence to mend himself, and if he does mend himself, he is no longer chronically absent, but if he does not

mend himself, let a tailor mend him. Anything that's mended is patched. If a virtuous man is mended, he is patched with sin. If a sinful man is mended, he is patched with virtue. If this simple argument is valid, well and good. If it is not valid, what would be the remedy? Olivia, the only true cuckold is calamity. People are wedded to fortune, and when fortune turns bad and is unfaithful to them, they become the equivalents of cuckolds. So, Olivia, turn away from calamity — turn away from excessive mourning for your late brother. The living must return to living. Know that beauty is a flower. It will not last. Enjoy the flower of your beauty, Olivia, and marry before your flower fades. *Carpe diem*, for all of us must one day die. Olivia has been behaving like a fool; therefore, I say again, take her away."

Olivia replied, "Sir, I bade them to take away *you*."

"Then you have made an error of the very worst kind," Feste said. "You have called me a fool, and it is true that I am wearing motley, which is the costume of a fool, but I do not wear motley in my brain. Good lady, give me permission to prove to you that you are a fool."

"Can you do it?"

"With ease, good lady," Feste replied.

"Prove it."

"I will do so with a catechism. I will ask you questions, and you will answer them honestly."

"Well, sir, for lack of a better entertainment, I will do so."

"Good lady, why do you mourn?"

"Good fool, I mourn because of my brother's death."

"I think his soul is in Hell, good lady."

"I know his soul is in Heaven, fool."

"Then you must be a fool, good lady, to mourn because your brother's soul is in Heaven."

Feste turned to the male servants and said, "Take away the fool, gentlemen."

Pleased with Feste, Olivia said, "What do you think of this fool, Malvolio? Hasn't he mended himself?"

"Yes, he does mend, and he shall continue to mend until the pangs of death shake him," Malvolio, who did not like Feste's long absence and dereliction of duty, said. "Infirmity, that decays the wise, does ever make the better fool. Senility makes fools of even the wisest."

"God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the betterment of your folly!" Feste, who was fighting — very well — for his job and did not want Olivia to hear Malvolio's criticisms of him, replied. "Sir Toby is willing to swear that I am not a sly and cunning and dangerous fox, but he will not bet even two pennies that you are not a fool."

"What do you say to that, Malvolio?" Olivia asked.

"I marvel that your ladyship takes delight in such an uninspired rascal as Feste," Malvolio replied. "I saw him defeated in a battle of wits the other day by an ordinary fool who has no more brains than a stone. Look at him now. He has shrugged his shoulders and turned away."

Unless you laugh and thereby encourage him to make jokes, he is gagged and unable to say anything. I swear that I regard so-called wise men, who crow with laughter at these professional fools, as being no better than the fools' sidekicks."

"Oh, you are sick with self-love and pride, Malvolio, and you taste with a sick appetite," Olivia said. "You are unable to appreciate what a jester does. You ought to be generous and liberal-minded, guiltless, and good-natured. You ought to regard as blunted arrows all those things that you now regard as cannonballs. A professional fool such as Feste commits no slander, even when he says nothing but abuse and criticism. A good jester will speak truth to power — and make that truth funny, too. A good fool can give good advice while making bad — and sometimes good — puns. That is a part of his job. And a man such as yourself who is known for his sound judgment is not a ranting lunatic even when he criticizes and complains. That is a part of your job. You have sound judgment, and that sound judgment can result in sound criticism."

Feste said to Olivia, "May Mercury, the god of deception, give you the gift of lying well because you have spoken so kindly of fools. If you are going to talk well about fools, you need to be able to lie well."

Maria entered the room and said to Olivia, "Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman who much desires to speak with you."

"Count Orsino sent him, didn't he?"

"I don't know, madam. He is a handsome young man, and he has some other men with him."

"Who is talking to him now and keeping him from entering this house?"

"Sir Toby, madam, your uncle."

"Keep Sir Toby away from the young man, please. Sir Toby — darn him! — speaks as if he were a madman."

Maria left to talk to Sir Toby.

Olivia said, "Take care of this, Malvolio. If Orsino sent this young man, get rid of him. Tell him that I am sick or not at home. Say whatever you have to — just get rid of him."

Malvolio left the room to talk to the young man.

Olivia said to Feste, "You can see that some people think that your fooling has grown stale, and they dislike it."

Feste replied, "You have spoken up in favor of fools, madam, just as if your oldest son, if you had one, wanted to be a fool and you were defending him. May Jove — the god Jupiter — stuff the head of your oldest son — when you have one — with brains. He may need the extra help because one of your relatives has a very weak brain — look! Here he comes!"

Sir Toby Belch entered the room.

Olivia said to Feste, "I swear that he is already half-drunk."

She asked Sir Toby, "Who was at the gate?"

“A gentleman.”

“I know that. Which gentleman?”

“He is a gentleman —”

Sir Toby belched and then said, “Darn these pickled herrings!”

He saw Feste and said, “How are you, fool?”

“I am well, good Sir Toby.”

Olivia said, “Sir Toby, you are practically in a drunken stupor. It’s still early in the day. Why are you so early in a state of lethargy?”

Sir Toby misheard her, or pretended to: “Lechery! I defy lechery!”

Then he added, “There is someone at the gate.”

“Who is he?” Olivia asked.

“He can be the Devil, if he wants,” Sir Toby replied. “I don’t care. Give me faith, and that will protect me from the Devil. Well, it doesn’t matter.”

Sir Toby left the room.

Olivia asked Feste, “What is a drunken man like, fool?”

“A drunken man is like a fool, a madman, and a drowned man. One drink too many makes him a fool. Two drinks too many make him a madman. Three drinks too many drown him.”

“Go and find a coroner, and let him hold an inquest on Sir Toby because Sir Toby has had three drinks too many — he has drowned. Go, and look after Sir Toby.”

“Sir Toby is only a madman right now,” Feste said. “The fool shall look after the madman.”

Feste left to keep an eye on Sir Toby. Feste knew that his job was now secure.

Malvolio entered the room and said to Olivia, “The young fellow outside swears that he will not leave until he speaks to you. I told him that you were sick. He said that he knew that and that was why he needed to speak to you. I told him that you were asleep. He said that he knew that and that was why he needed to speak to you. What can I say to him, lady? Whatever I say to him, he has an answer, and he will not leave.”

“Tell him that he cannot speak to me.”

“I have told him that, and he says that he will stand at your door as if he were one of the columns holding up the porch roof or as if he were one of the legs of a bench outdoors. He says that he will not leave until after he has spoken to you.”

“What kind of man is he?”

“Just an ordinary man.”

“What manner of man?”

“He is an ill-mannered man. He says that he will speak to you whether you want him to or not.”

“What is his appearance, and how old is he?”

“He is not yet a man and no longer a boy. He is like a peapod or an apple just before it ripens. He stands between being a man and being a boy. He is good-looking, and he speaks very sharply. He speaks as if he were an ill-tempered young child who has just been forced to stop drinking his mother’s milk.”

“Let him come in and talk to me. Call in Maria to be with me and be a chaperone.”

Malvolio called, “Maria, Olivia wants you to come here.”

Maria walked into the room.

Olivia said, “Give me my veil. Throw it over my face. Once again, I will listen to one of Orsino’s ambassadors.”

Maria also put on a veil. This made it difficult for Viola to tell who was the lady of the house and who was the servant.

Viola came into the room, accompanied by a few attendants.

She asked, “Who is the lady of the house?”

Olivia replied, “Speak to me; I shall answer for her. What do you want?”

Viola began to recite a speech that she had written: “Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty.”

She stopped and then said to Maria, “Please, tell me if this woman is the lady of the house because I have never seen the lady of the house. I would hate to recite my speech to the wrong person because it is a very good speech and I have taken great pains to memorize it.”

Viola said to both Olivia and Maria, “Good beauties, do not mock me. I am very sensitive, and I feel even the smallest unkindness.”

“From where have you come, sir?” Olivia asked.

“I am here to recite my speech,” Viola said. “The answer to your question is not part of my speech.”

She added, “Gentle lady, please tell me whether you are the lady of the house, so that if you are I can proceed with my speech.”

“Are you an actor?” Olivia asked.

“No, my wise little sweetheart, I am not a professional actor,” Viola said.

She thought, *And yet, in the teeth of ill fate, I swear that I am not the person whose part I play.*

Then she asked again, “Are you the lady of the house?”

“If I do not usurp myself, I am,” Olivia replied.

“If you are the lady of the house, then you usurp herself,” Viola said. “You wrongfully possess your own person. What is yours to give is not yours to keep. You ought to give yourself to a husband. But I ought to be reciting my speech, and I am not doing that. I will continue with my praise of you in my speech, and then I will tell you the heart — the important part — of the message.”

“Just tell me the important part,” Olivia said. “You may skip the praise.”

“But, lady,” Viola objected. “I worked hard to memorize the praise, and it is poetic.”

“The more poetic it is, the more likely it is to be fake,” Olivia said. “Please keep the praise to yourself. I heard that you were rude when you were at my gate. I allowed you to see me because I wanted to marvel at such a rude person — not because I wanted to hear what you have to say. If you are insane, go away; if you have reason, be brief. I am not so lunatic that I want to be a part of an insane conversation.”

Maria said to Viola, “Will you hoist sail, sir? Here lies your way.”

She pointed to the door.

“No, good swabber of decks. I intend to cast anchor here for a while longer,” Viola said to Maria.

Viola said to Olivia about Maria, who was a very short woman, “Please pacify your threatening giant, sweet lady.”

She added, “Are you willing to hear my message?”

Olivia said, “You must have some hideous message to deliver, since you are ill mannered. Tell me what you have to say.”

“It alone concerns your ear,” Viola said. “I bring no declaration of war, no demand for tribute: I hold the olive branch in my hand; my words are as full of peace as they are full of content.”

“Yet you have behaved rudely. Who are you? What do you want?”

“The rudeness that has been apparent in me I have learned from the way I have been treated here. Who I am, and what I want, are as secret as virginity. My message is for your ears only. To you, my message is divine. To others, my message is profane.”

Olivia said to the other people in the room, “Let this young man and me be alone. I will hear his divine message to me.”

Maria and the others left the room.

Olivia said, “You said that you have something divine to tell me. What is your text? What is the gospel passage that you will preach about?”

Viola began, “Most sweet lady —”

Olivia interrupted, “That is a comfortable doctrine — it brings comfort to me. Much may be said in favor of your text. Next question: Where lies your text?”

“In the chest of Orsino.”

“In his chest!” Olivia said. “That’s an interesting place for a text. In what chapter of his chest?”

“To continue your use of biblical exegesis, it lies in the foremost place in his heart.”

“I have read that text,” Olivia said. “It is heresy. Have you anything more to say?”

“Good madam, let me see your face.”

“Has Orsino told you to negotiate with my face? You are now departing from your text — that is, straying from your theme — but I will draw the curtain and show you the picture you want to see.”

She took off her veil, and then she said, “Look at my face now. This is the way I look at the present time. Think of my face as a portrait. Don’t you think that it is well done?”

Viola replied, “It is excellently done, if God did all that I see and you have had no help from cosmetics.”

“Everything you see is natural. Cosmetics wash off, but my face will endure wind and weather.”

“Then your beauty has a truly beautiful blending of colors: the red of your lips and cheeks and the white of your face. Nature has painted your face with paint that is not artificial. Lady, you are the cruelest woman alive if you will take your beauty to the grave and leave the world no copy.”

“Sir, I will not be so hard-hearted. I will give the world more than one copy. I will give several lists of my beauty — it shall be inventoried, and every item and every part will be added as a codicil to my will. Item: two lips, red. Item: two grey eyes, with lids. Item: one neck. Item: one chin. And so forth.”

“I meant that you should leave behind you a copy in the form of a child.”

“Were you sent here just to praise my beauty?”

“I can see that you are too proud, but even if you were as proud as the Devil, you are beautiful. Orsino, my master, loves you. Such love would receive no more than its due even if you were crowned with the title of the unequalled Queen of Beauty!”

“How does he love me?”

“He loves you with adorations, abundant tears, with groans that thunder love, and with sighs of fiery heat.”

“Orsino knows what I think about him. I cannot love him. Yet I suppose him to be virtuous, and I know that he is noble. He is wealthy, and he is a fresh and stainless youth. He is well spoken of and has a good reputation. He is generous, and he is well educated and courageous. Physically, he is a graceful and attractive person. Nevertheless, I do not love him. He should know that; he has certainly heard it for a long time.”

“If I loved you the way that Orsino — a martyr to love — loves you, and if I suffered the way that he suffers because of his love for you, I would not be able to understand why you refuse to return his love. I would find no sense in such a refusal.”

“And what would you do if you were Orsino?” Olivia asked.

“Willows are the emblems of unrequited love. I would make for myself a willow cabin at your gate, and I would call upon my soul — that is, you — within your house. I would write songs about a faithful love that is not returned, and I would sing them loudly even in the middle of night. I would shout your name to the echoing hills and make the air call your name: ‘Olivia!’ The nymph Echo would continually be at my service and help me make the air sound your name. No matter where you would go, you would pity me.”

Olivia thought, *I would like that — a lot. I want to know this young man better — much better.*

She said, “Doing such things might get you somewhere. Who are your parents?”

“My parents’ social rank was above that of my present social rank, yet I am doing well. I am a gentleman.”

“Return to Orsino and tell him that I cannot love him. Tell him to send no more messengers to me, unless, perhaps, you come to me again to tell me how Orsino takes my message. Fare you well. I thank you for your pains: Spend this for me.”

She held out money for Viola to take, but Viola declined to take it.

She said, “I am no messenger who needs a tip, lady; keep your money. It is Orsino, not myself, who lacks recompense. He gets no return for the love he has spent. May you fall in love with someone who has a heart of flint, and may that someone regard with contempt your love, the way you regard with contempt Orsino’s love. Farewell, fair cruelty.”

Viola left the room to return to Orsino.

Olivia said to herself, “I asked him about his parents, and he said that their social rank was above that of his present social rank and that he is a gentleman. I can well believe that he is a gentleman. His manner of speaking, face, limbs, actions, and spirit provide five proofs that he is a gentleman. But, Olivia, slow down! You could go fast if this young man were Orsino and Orsino were the servant. What is happening to me? Can I be falling in love so quickly? This young man has perfections that invisibly and stealthily are creeping into my mind. Well, I am in love. So be it.”

She took a ring off her finger and called, “Malvolio!”

Malvolio entered the room and said, “Here I am, madam, at your service.”

“Run after that stubborn messenger, Orsino’s servant. He left this ring behind him, with no regard to whether or not I wanted it. Tell him that I don’t want it. Tell him not to flatter Orsino that I may love him — tell him not to give Orsino any hope that I may love him. I do not love Orsino. If that young messenger will come tomorrow, he can tell me how Orsino takes my rejection of his love for me. Hurry, Malvolio, and catch up to the young messenger.”

“Madam, I will,” Malvolio said, and he left the room.

“I am not sure what I am doing,” Olivia said to herself. “I am afraid that I am falling in love with this young man’s good looks and that I am not using my mind. Fate, you are in control — we do not control ourselves. Whatever will be, will be.”

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, had survived the shipwreck. Now he was on the coast, talking with the person who had saved his life and who had given him food and shelter: Antonio.

Antonio asked, "Won't you stay longer here? And if you must go, will you allow me to go with you?"

Sebastian replied, "I am sorry, but I must leave, and I must not allow you to go with me. My astrological stars shine darkly over me, and my fate is malignant. If you go with me, my bad luck may affect you; therefore, I must ask you to allow me to travel alone. I would repay your kindness badly if I were to share my bad fortune with you."

"At least let me know where you are bound."

"My plan is to simply wander here and there. I do not know where I will end up. I see, however, that you have good manners, and they prevent you from asking questions about myself because you are afraid that you will ask about something that I do not want to talk about. Etiquette demands that I tell you about myself. You ought to know that my real name is Sebastian. Out of caution, I have been using the alias Roderigo. My father was Sebastian of Messaline, a man I know you have heard of. When he died, he left behind him my sister and me. We were twins; we were both born in the same hour — I wish to God that we had both died in the same hour! But you, sir, prevented that. You rescued me from the sea that drowned my sister."

"I am sorry that she drowned."

"Although she was said to resemble me, many people thought that she was beautiful. That may have been generous praise, but I can say without reservation to anybody and everybody that her mind was so good and intelligent that even an envious person would have to admit that that is true. My sister drowned in the salt water of the sea, and my salty tears drown her memory each time I think of her."

"Pardon me, sir, for not giving you better hospitality."

"Forgive me, Antonio, for the trouble I have given to you."

Antonio deeply loved Sebastian as a friend.

Antonio said, "Unless you want me to die out of grief because you are leaving me, allow me to be your servant and go with you."

"Don't ask that. It would kill me — thereby undoing your heroic act of saving my life — if you were to suffer from my bad fortune by going with me. I am filled with tenderness toward you, and I am enough like my mother that I too easily cry and show my feelings. But now I will set out on the first part of my wanderings. I am going to the court of Orsino, the Duke of Illyria. Goodbye."

Sebastian departed, and Antonio said to himself, "May the gods protect you! I have many enemies in the court of Duke Orsino; otherwise, I would go there and see you. But, come what

may, I do adore you so, that danger shall seem to be like entertainment, and I will go. So, off I will go to Court Orsino's town, where I intend to see you."

— 2.2 —

Viola walked on a street, and Malvolio, walking more quickly than she, caught up with her.

Malvolio said to Viola, "Are you the young man who was just now talking with the Countess Olivia?"

"Yes, I was, sir. I have been walking and have just now arrived here."

"Olivia returns this ring to you, sir. You would have saved me the trouble of walking after you, if you had taken it away yourself. She adds, moreover, that you should tell Orsino very clearly that she wants nothing to do with him. One more thing: Olivia does not want you to deliver any more declarations of love from Orsino, although she will allow you to report to her how Orsino takes her rejection of his love for her. Now, take back this ring."

Viola knew that she had left no ring for Olivia; therefore, this must be Olivia's ring; however, Viola did not want to reveal that information to Malvolio.

Viola said, "Olivia took the ring. I want nothing to do with it."

Malvolio replied, "Come, sir, you peevishly threw it to her; and she wants to return it to you."

He dropped the ring on the ground and said, "There the ring lies. If it is worth stooping for, pick it up. If you don't want to pick it up, let it become the property of whoever finds it."

Malvolio departed.

Viola picked up the ring and said, "I left no ring with Olivia. What does she mean by this? God forbid that she has fallen in love with me. My disguise has fooled her! She certainly stared at me when we were alone together. Indeed, she stared so much that she became distracted and spoke in starts and did not finish her sentences. Sometimes, she lost the power of speech. She is in love with me, and she is crafty enough to send this churlish messenger to me to make an invitation to visit her again. She says that she does not want the ring of Orsino — why, he did not give her a ring! I am the 'man' she loves! If this is true, and it is, then I feel pity for Olivia. She would be better off if she loved a dream. Disguise, I see, is wicked, and the Devil uses it to make mischief. How easy is it for handsome and deceitful men to imprint themselves on the hearts of women just like a seal imprints itself on wax! It's a pity, but the frailty of us women is the cause of our susceptibility to fall in love — we ourselves are not the cause! We are made this way, and neither Olivia nor I can help falling in love. How will this turn out? Orsino has fallen in love with Olivia, I — a woman dressed in men's clothing — have fallen in love with Orsino, and poor Olivia, who thinks that I am a man, seems to have fallen in love with me. What will become of this? I am a monster: part man and part woman. Since I am disguised as a man, I cannot gain the love of Orsino. Since I really am a woman, Olivia cannot gain my love. She shall sigh hopelessly out of unrequited love. Time, you must untangle this, not I; it is too hard a knot for me to untie!"

— 2.3 —

In Olivia's house, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek were partying. As usual, they had drunk too much.

Sir Toby said, “Come here, Sir Andrew. We are not in bed although it is after midnight, and therefore we are up early. And, of course, *delicula surgere saluberrimum est* — to rise early is very healthy. I am sure that you know that.”

“No, I do not know that. Latin is another language I do not know. But I do know this: To be up late is to be up late.”

“That is a false conclusion. I hate it the way I hate an empty tankard. To be up after midnight is to be up early — it is in the early hours of the morning. Therefore, to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed early. So say the ancient scholars. Do not the ancient scholars also say that our life consists of the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth?”

“Yes, they say that, but I think that life consists of eating and drinking.”

“I prefer your scholarship to that of the ancient scholars,” Sir Toby said.

He called, “Maria! Bring us a jug of wine!”

Feste entered the room and said, “How are you, my friends! Have you ever seen the picture of ‘We Three’?”

The picture Feste referred to showed two fools or asses — the third fool or ass was the person looking at the picture.

Sir Toby replied, “Welcome, ass. Now let’s have a song.”

Feste’s talents included playing musical instruments and singing and dancing.

Sir Andrew said, “Truly, the fool has an excellent singing voice. I would give a large amount of money to be able to play and sing and dance as well as this fool can.”

He said to Feste, “Truly, last night you were very funny. You spoke wonderful nonsense about Pigrogromitus and the Vapians passing the equator of Queubus. That tale was very good entertainment. I sent you sixpence to spend on your girlfriend — did you get it?”

Sir Andrew had praised Feste’s nonsense, so Feste replied with nonsense to thank him: “I did impeticos thy gratillity, for Malvolio’s nose is no whipstock. My lady has a white hand, and the Myrmidons are no bottle-ale houses.”

“Excellent!” Sir Andrew said. “Why, this is the best fooling, and the best entertainment, when all is said and done. Now, let’s hear a song!”

“Good idea,” Sir Toby said, handing Feste some money. “There is sixpence for you. Let’s have a song.”

“Here is sixpence from me, too,” Sir Andrew said. “If one knight gives a sixpence, the second knight ought to, too.”

Feste asked, “Do you prefer a love song or a song of the good and simple life in the countryside?”

“A love song, a love song,” Sir Toby said.

“I agree,” Sir Andrew said. “I don’t care for a good and simple life.”

Feste sang, *“Oh, mistress mine, where are you roaming?”*

*“Oh, stay and hear; your true love’s coming,*

*“Who can sing both high and low.*

*“Trip no further, pretty sweeting;*

*“Journeys end in lovers meeting,*

*“Every wise man’s son does know.”*

Feste thought, *Wise men — and wise women — seek love.*

Sir Andrew said, “Excellent.”

Sir Toby added, “Good, good.”

Feste sang, *“What is love? ’tis not hereafter;*

*“Present mirth has present laughter.*

*“What’s to come is still unsure:*

*“In delay there lies no plenty;*

*“Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,*

*“Youth’s a stuff that will not endure.”*

Feste thought, *Seize the day. Carpe diem. Youth is fleeting, so enjoy it. Neither Orsino nor Olivia is now doing that.*

Sir Andrew was full of praise for Feste’s singing: “He has a mellifluous voice — this I swear as a true knight.”

Sir Toby said, “He sang a catchy tune — it is contagious.”

Sir Andrew said, “It is sweet and contagious.”

Sir Toby said, “If we could hear the tune with our nose, we would enjoy catching a cold.”

He added, “What shall we do now? Shall we drink until the sky spins in circles? Shall we sing and keep the night owl up late — and early? Love songs are supposed to draw souls out of the body because of the songs’ wickedness, so I’m not sure why weavers sing psalms — love songs to God — as they work. Shall we sing a three-singer song that will draw our souls out of our bodies? Shall we do that?”

“Please, let’s do it,” Sir Andrew said. “I am as expert at singing catchy songs as a dog is at whatever a dog does.”

Feste said, “Like you, a dog is an expert when it comes to a catch.”

“That is true,” Sir Andrew said, “Let our catchy three-singer song be ‘Hold Your Peace, Knave, and I Beg that You Hold Your Peace.’”

“Hold Your Peace” was a riotous party song.

“In this song, each of the singers takes turns singing,” Feste said, “and each of the singers calls the other singers ‘knave.’ Is it all right if I call you a knave, knight?”

“It won’t be the first time that I have been called a knave,” Sir Andrew said. “You start the song, fool. It goes, ‘Hold your peace.’”

“If I hold my peace, I will have to remain silent,” Feste said. “I will never be able to get started singing.”

“That funny!” Sir Andrew said. “But, now, begin.”

The three partiers sang, and in their song two drunks and one fool called each other names and told each other to shut up.

Maria walked into the room and said to Sir Toby, “What a caterwauling you are making! Olivia must be awakening her steward, Malvolio, and ordering him to kick you out of her house. If she isn’t, never again believe anything I say.”

Sir Toby replied drunkenly, “Olivia is from China, we are politicians, and Malvolio has his nose to the grindstone. Olivia is a Confucian and concerned about order, we are cunning schemers who want preferential treatment, and Malvolio’s nose bleeds.”

He sang, “*Three merry men be we.*”

He then asked Maria, “Aren’t I related to Olivia? Aren’t she and I niece and uncle? Fiddle-faddle. I don’t need to worry about Olivia.”

He sang, “*There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady!*”

“Heaven help me,” Feste said to Sir Andrew. “Sir Toby makes an excellent clown.”

“Yes, he does it well enough when he is in the mood,” Sir Andrew said. “So do I. He acts the clown with a good deal of style. I do it more naturally.”

Yes, Feste thought. *You act the clown as if you were a born idiot.*

Sir Toby sang, “*Oh, the twelfth day of December.*”

Maria said, “For the love of God, be quiet!”

Malvolio entered the room and said, “My masters, are you mad? If not, what are you? Have you no wit, manners, or decency that would stop you from gabbling like foul-mouthed, drunken tinkers at this time of night? Do you think Olivia’s house is an alehouse where you can squeak out your cobblers’ songs at the top of your voices? Is there no respect of place, persons, or time — it is past midnight — in you?”

Sir Toby replied, “We do respect time — we did keep time, sir, in our songs. We have good rhythm. Go hang yourself!”

Malvolio replied, “Sir Toby, I must be blunt with you. My lady told me to tell you, that, though she has given you a place to stay because you are her uncle, she dislikes your disorders. If you can separate yourself from your misdemeanors, you are welcome to stay in her house; if not, and if it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to tell you goodbye.”

Sir Toby sang, “*Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.*”

“No, good Sir Toby,” Maria said. “Don’t sing.”

Feste sang the next line of the song: “*His eyes do show his days are almost done.*”

“Must you continue to sing?” Malvolio asked.

Sir Toby sang, “*But I will never die.*”

Feste made up an additional lyric: “*Sir Toby, there you lie.*”

Malvolio said sarcastically, “Your behavior does you credit.”

Sir Toby sang, “*Shall I tell him to go?*”

Feste sang, “*What happens if you do?*”

“*Shall I tell him to go and not mince my words?*” Sir Toby sang.

“*Oh, no, no, no, no, you dare not,*” Feste sang.

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “Are we singing out of time? Not with our rhythm! You lied! You are nothing more than an employee — a steward!”

He added, “Do you think, because you are virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?”

For Sir Toby, it was always time for cakes and ale and parties. For Olivia and for Malvolio, it was not time for cakes and ale and parties when Olivia was trying to sleep.

Feste said, “Very definitely, sometime is the right time for cakes and ale. Hot ale spiced with ginger warms the mouth. Saint Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, knew the importance of wine. Jesus’ first miracle was turning water into wine so that a wedding could be properly celebrated.”

Sir Toby said to Feste, “You are right.”

Feste favored Sir Toby over Malvolio — Sir Toby gave him tips.

Feste had been drinking — a lot — and as Sir Toby continued to argue with Malvolio, Feste began to nod and then to sleep.

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “Go and rub your steward’s chain with crumbs to polish it. You are only a servant.”

He said to Maria, “Bring us a jug of wine, Maria.”

Maria got a jug of wine for Sir Toby, whom she liked.

Malvolio said to Maria, “If you prized Olivia’s wishes and did not have contempt for them, Mistress Mary, you would not bring more wine out to encourage this uncivil behavior. I shall tell Olivia what you have done.”

Malvolio departed.

After Malvolio had gone, Maria said in the direction of the door he had exited through, “You have donkey ears. Go and shake them.”

Sir Andrew said, "I think that it would be an excellent idea to challenge a man to a duel and then not show up and so make a fool of him. I would like to make a fool of Malvolio."

"Do it," Sir Toby said, thinking that Sir Andrew fighting would be a funny sight. "You are a knight, after all. I will write your challenge to Malvolio for you, or if you prefer, I will deliver your challenge orally."

Maria said, "Sweet Sir Toby, be calm, quiet, and patient for tonight. Since Duke Orsino's young man talked with your niece Olivia, she has been much disturbed and distracted. As for Monsieur Malvolio, leave him to me. If I do not trick him, do not think that I am intelligent enough to lie straight in my bed. I intend to make the name 'Malvolio' a synonym for 'laughingstock.' I know that I can do it."

"Tell us something about Malvolio," Sir Toby said. "What characteristics of his can you use to trick him?"

"Sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan. He affects a puritanical demeanor. He is morally narrow-minded and thinks that everyone else ought to be, too."

Sir Andrew said, "If I thought that, I would beat him like a dog."

"What, for being a Puritan?" Sir Toby said. "What is your ingenious reason for wanting to beat him?"

"I have no ingenious reason, but I have reason good enough."

Maria said, "Malvolio is not a Puritan; he is a kind of Puritan. Sometimes, he acts like a Puritan. Sometimes, he does not. He is a time-server — he changes his views to suit the prevailing circumstances or fashion. He is nothing consistently except for being an affected ass who learns rules by heart and quotes them at great length. He has the highest opinion of himself, and he thinks that he is so crammed with excellent qualities that he believes with all his heart that all those who see him like him."

An impartial observer might think, *Malvolio knows very well that Sir Toby does not like or respect him, but Maria is angry that Malvolio is going to tell Olivia that she served the late-night-partier Sir Toby a jug of wine, and so she exaggerates when she says that Malvolio "thinks that he is so crammed with excellent qualities that he believes with all his heart that all those who see him like him." If she is exaggerating about that, she may also be exaggerating about other things concerning Malvolio.*

Maria added, "I will exploit Malvolio's failings and make a fool of him."

Sir Toby asked, "What will you do?"

"I will drop where he will find it an ambiguous love letter that he will think is written to him because it will describe the color of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expression of his eye, his forehead, and his complexion. Malvolio shall read the letter and think that he is fully described in it. My handwriting is very similar to that of Olivia, your niece. When we find an old note that we have forgotten about, she and I can hardly decide which of us wrote it."

"Excellent! I smell an excellent practical joke," Sir Toby said

“I have it in my nose, too,” Sir Andrew said.

“You will write a love letter and Malvolio shall find it,” Sir Toby said. “He shall think that my niece wrote the letter and that she is in love with him.”

“Yes,” Maria said. “My idea is a horse of that color. If you had thought differently, that would be a horse of a different color.”

Sir Andrew said, “Your horse of the same color is to make him an ass.”

“You better believe it,” Maria said.

“This is an admirable plan!” Sir Andrew said.

“It will be fun fit for a King,” Maria said. “I know that my plan will work. He will get the medicine that is coming to him. You two and the fool will be placed where you can see Malvolio find and read the letter. You shall see how he interprets the letter and thinks that Olivia loves him. But right now, it is time to go to bed and dream about our joke and our revenge. Good night.”

Maria exited.

Sir Toby said, “Good night, Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons.” This was another mild joke about Maria’s short stature.

“I swear that she is a good woman,” Sir Andrew said.

“She is a beagle — a small hound,” Sir Toby said. “She adores me. What do you think about that?”

“I was adored once, too,” Sir Andrew replied.

Men — and women — seek love. Using love as the bait for a trap was likely to work. And if Sir Andrew could be adored, why not Malvolio?

Sir Toby said, “It’s time for bed, Sir Andrew. But remember to send for more money for us to spend.”

“If I don’t marry Olivia, your niece, I will be grievously out of pocket.”

“Send for money, Sir Andrew. If you don’t marry Olivia, then you have my permission to call me a eunuch.”

“I do think that I will marry Olivia. If I don’t, never again believe anything I say.”

“Come with me,” Sir Toby said. “I’ll heat up some wine. It is too late to go to bed now. Come, Sir Andrew.”

A drunk Sir Andrew was more likely to send away for more money.

— 2.4 —

Orsino, Viola, Orsino’s attendant Curio, and others, including musicians, were in a room in Duke Orsino’s palace.

Orsino said, “Play some music for me.”

The musicians began to play.

Orsino said, "Good morning, friends. Cesario, remember that old and quaint song that we heard last night? I thought that it did relieve my lovesickness much more than the light airs and studied, artificial phrases of these fast and giddy-paced times. I would like to hear a verse of that song."

Curio answered, "The person is not here, sir, who should sing it."

"Who sings that song?"

"Feste, the jester, sir; he is a fool whom the lady Olivia's father took much delight in. He is somewhere in the palace."

"Find him, and while we wait we will listen to the music of that song."

Curio exited, and the musicians played the tune to the song. They had heard the song the previous night, and they knew the tune.

Orsino said to Viola, "Come here, young man. If you ever love someone, remember me as you endure its sweet pangs. For such as I am, all true lovers are: changeable and difficult to deal with. The only thing that I can focus on is the face of the woman I love."

He added, "Do you like this tune?"

Viola, who did like the tune, said, "It gives a very echo to the seat — the heart — where Love is throned. Anyone who hears it feels what a lover feels."

"You speak masterfully," Orsino said. "I swear that as young as you are, your eye has seen a face that it loves. Is that true, young man?"

"A little. Yes."

"What kind of woman do you love?"

"She is very much like you."

"In that case, you deserve someone better. How old is she?"

"About your age."

"Then she is too old," Orsino said. "A woman always ought to love someone who is older than she is. That way, she can adapt herself to him, and that way she will stay beautiful longer and keep herself in her husband's affection until that affection becomes rock-steady. After all, young man, although we men praise ourselves, we are not as constant in love as women are. Our loves are more giddy and unstable than the loves of women, and our loves are more flighty and wavering, and they are quicker to be lost and to become worn-out than the loves of women are."

"I think that you are right, sir," Viola said.

"So let the woman you love be younger than yourself, so you will continue to love her long enough for your love to become rock-steady. If she is older than you, she may lose her beauty too quickly for that to happen. Women are as roses, whose fair petals, once they have fully opened, do begin to fall to the ground that very hour."

“Unfortunately, the beauty of women is exactly like that,” Viola said. “As soon as their beauty reaches perfection, it begins to die.”

Curio returned with Feste. The musicians stopped playing.

Orsino said, “Feste, let me hear the song you sang last night. Listen to it, Cesario. It is old and plain. The spinners and the knitters in the sun and the carefree maidens who weave lace often sing it. It is simple truth, and its theme is the innocence of love in the old days.”

Feste asked, “Are you ready to hear it, sir?”

“Yes. Please sing.”

The musicians started playing, and Feste sang, “*Come quickly to me, come quickly, death,*

“*And in a sad coffin made of cypress let me be laid;*

“*Go away, go away, breath;*

“*I am slain by a fair cruel maiden.*

“*My shroud of white, adorned with yew leaves,*

“*Oh, prepare it!*

“*No lover more constant than I*

“*Has ever died for love.*

“*Not a flower, not a flower sweet*

“*On my black coffin let there be strewn;*

“*Not a friend, not a friend greet*

“*My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:*

“*A thousand thousand sighs to save,*

“*Lay me, oh, where*

“*Sad true lover shall never find my grave,*

“*To weep there!*”

Feste thought, *The theme of this song is dying because of unrequited love. In the entire history of the world, this has never happened although many, many people have thought that it would happen. Right now, Orsino believes — or enjoys believing — that this could happen to him. He is wrong.*

Orsino gave Feste money, saying, “This is for your pains in singing that song.”

“There is nothing painful about it, sir. I enjoy singing.”

“In that case, the money is for your pleasure.”

“As the saying goes,” Feste said, “pleasure will be paid with pain, sooner or later.”

“Give me now leave to leave thee,” Orsino said. This was a polite way of saying that Feste should go now. Orsino was in a melancholy mood and not in a mood for jests.

Feste said, “May the melancholy god — Saturn — protect you; and may your tailor make your jacket out of iridescent silk because your changeable mind is like an opal that constantly changes colors. Men like you should become sea-merchants so that they could deal in everything and go everywhere. Your variable moods would match the variable moods of the sea. You would have a good sea voyage. Farewell.”

Feste saw something in Orsino that made him think that Orsino was changeable, although so far Orsino had been consistent in expressing his love for Olivia. Certainly, Orsino had been changeable in one way. He had wanted to hear music, and so he had ordered Feste to be brought to him, but as soon as Feste had finished singing the song, Orsino had ordered him to go away.

Feste departed, and Orsino said, “Everyone except for Cesario, please leave.”

They left, and Orsino said, “Once more, Cesario, go to Olivia, who cruelly does not love me, and tell this woman that my love is more noble than any other in the world. Tell her that I regard as lightly as fortune does her land and property and everything that she has inherited. Fortune does not value them, because it gives them and takes them away. What I value, and what attracts my soul, is the beauty with which nature has adorned Olivia.”

Viola replied, “But what if she cannot love you, sir?”

“I will not take that for an answer.”

“But you must, sir,” Viola said. “Say that some lady — and such a lady may exist — loves you as much as you love Olivia. You cannot love this lady, and you tell her that. Doesn’t she have to take that as an answer?”

“No woman’s body could withstand the beating of so strong a passion as love has given to my heart. No woman’s heart could be so big as to hold so much passion as my heart holds. Women lack the ability to retain such passion. Unfortunately, women’s love is like appetite. It comes from the palate, not from the heart. Women’s love can be more than satisfied — it can have too much and feel repulsion because of excess. But my appetite is as hungry as the sea. It can swallow everything. Make no comparison between the love that a woman could have for me and the love that I have for Olivia.”

“Yes, but I know —”

“You know what?”

“I know too well how a woman can love a man. Truly, women are as true of heart as men. My father had a daughter who loved a man the way, perhaps, that I might love you, if I were a woman.”

“What happened to her?”

“It is a blank page. She never told the man of her love for him, so her love stayed hidden. The concealment destroyed the rosiness of her cheeks like a worm destroys an apple. Brooding, she grieved with lovesickness, and with a pallid melancholy, she sat like a carving of smiling Patience on a tomb. She did not display the true emotion that she felt. Isn’t this woman’s

behavior indicative of love? We men may say more and swear more, but indeed we are putting on a show. We men show greater love than we feel. We men make impressive vows of love, but the vows are more impressive than the love.”

“Did your sister die of love?”

“I am all the daughters of my father’s house, and all the brothers too, but as of now I do not know the answer to that question,” Viola said.

She asked, “Shall I go and see Olivia for you?”

“Yes. That is the business at hand. Go quickly to her. Give her this jewel and tell her my love for her cannot be restrained and that she must love me.”

— 2.5 —

A change had been made in Maria’s plan. She would still plant the forged love letter where Malvolio would find it, but the people who would witness what would happen afterward would be Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian, a servant who knew Sir Toby well and was on good terms with him. Fabian did not work directly under Malvolio. The original plan had been for Feste, not Fabian, to be present when Malvolio found the forged letter.

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian were in Olivia’s garden, a place where Malvolio liked to take walks.

Sir Toby said, “Come with us, Mr. Fabian.”

“Absolutely,” Fabian said. “I do not want to miss this. If I did, I would drown in sadness.”

Sir Toby asked Fabian, “Won’t you be happy to see this sheep-biter, this sneaky dog, this hypocrite, this Malvolio be shamed?”

“I would exult. Did you know that he got me into trouble with Olivia because of a bear-baiting here? Olivia is tender-hearted and does not want bears to be chained up and then attacked by dogs.”

Sir Toby said, “To make Malvolio angry, we will bring the bear back here, and we will fool Malvolio so badly that he will feel as if he is black and blue with bruises. Isn’t that right, Sir Andrew?”

“It certainly is. If we don’t make a fool of Malvolio, we don’t deserve to live.”

Sir Toby saw Maria coming toward them and said, “Here comes the little practical joker.”

Maria told the three men, “All of you hide yourselves in the shrubbery. Malvolio is coming this way. For the past half-hour, he has been walking in the sunlight and using his shadow as a mirror as he practices courtly gestures. Watch him, and laugh at him. I know that this letter I forged will make a self-deceiving idiot of him. Hide, if you want to have a good laugh.”

She dropped the letter on the ground and said, “Lie there until Malvolio finds you. Poachers catch trout by stroking their gills. We will catch Malvolio by stroking his ego with flattery. His pride will make him believe that this letter proves that Olivia loves him.”

Maria departed, and Malvolio arrived.

Malvolio said to himself, "Luck is important. Luck is all-important. I am not married to Olivia because of bad luck. I had the bad luck to be born into a lower social class than Olivia. Maria once told me that Olivia was fond of me, and I have heard Olivia herself come close to saying she loved me. She said that, if she ever fell in love, it would be with someone who is like me. In addition, she treats me better and with more respect than she does any of her other servants. Knowing these things, what should I think?"

"He's an overweening, arrogant, presumptuous rogue!" Sir Toby said.

"Be quiet!" Fabian said. "His conceit is making a proud rooster out of him. Look at how he struts with his nose held high!"

"I could so beat the rogue!" Sir Andrew said.

"Be quiet, I say!" Sir Toby said.

Malvolio said, "I want to be Count Malvolio!"

"Idiot!" Sir Toby said.

"Shoot him!" Sir Andrew said.

"Be quiet," Sir Toby said.

"I could be Count Malvolio. There is precedent for it. A woman from a high social class married a man from a lower social class: The lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe."

"Damn him! He is like Jezebel, the proud wife in the Old Testament!" Sir Andrew said.

"Shh!" Fabian whispered. "Malvolio is deep in his daydream. His imagination is making him swell up his chest."

"After I have been married to Olivia for three months, and after I have sat in my chair of state — my throne — for three months —"

"I would like to have a crossbow that can fire stones right now," Sir Toby said. "I would hit him in the eye!"

Malvolio continued, "I would call my servants together, as I wore my velvet robe that is embroidered with leafy branches. I would have just come from a couch where I left Olivia sleeping."

Presumably, she would be sleeping after a session of sex.

"Fire and brimstone!" Sir Toby said.

"Shh!" Fabian hissed.

"I would adopt an air of authority, and I would gravely look at all who are present and tell them that I know my place and I hope that they know their place. Then I would ask for my new relative Sir Toby."

"Bring bolts and shackles! Bring fetters!" Sir Toby said.

"Shh! Be quiet!" Fabian said.

“Seven of my servants would obediently go out to find Sir Toby,” Malvolio said. “I would frown as I wait. Perhaps I would wind my watch or I would play with my —”

Here Malvolio touched the chain that stewards wore as a mark of their position. He remembered that if he married Olivia he would no longer wear a chain, and so he finished the sentence with “some rich jewel.”

Neglecting to say “Sir,” he continued, “Toby approaches and bows to me.”

“I am going to kill this guy,” Sir Toby said.

“Although it is torture, we must be quiet,” Fabian said.

Malvolio continued, “I would extend my hand to him like this, and I would replace my friendly smile with a stern look of authority.”

Sir Toby said, “And then I would hit him in the mouth.”

Malvolio continued, “I then say, ‘Kinsman Toby, my having married your niece gives me the right to speak to you frankly.’”

“Oh, really?” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio continued, “You must stop getting drunk.”

“And you must stop being a jackass,” Sir Toby said.

“Be quiet,” Fabian said, “or you will ruin our trap.”

Malvolio continued, “In addition, you are wasting your time with a foolish knight.”

Sir Andrew said, “He means me. I’m sure of it.”

Malvolio continued, “I refer, of course, to Sir Andrew.”

Sir Andrew said, “I knew that he meant me. Lots of people call me foolish.”

Malvolio saw the letter that Maria had written and then dropped in the garden. He said, “What is this?”

Fabian said, “The mouse has seen the cheese in the trap.”

Malvolio picked up the letter.

Sir Toby said, “Shh! Please, please, read the letter out loud!”

Malvolio looked at the writing on the outside of the letter and said, “This is Olivia’s handwriting. Look! Here are her exact C’s, her U’s and her T’s and this is how she makes her big P’s. It is, without any question, her handwriting.”

Sir Andrew asked, “Why ‘seas,’ ‘ewes,’ and ‘teas’?”

Sir Toby and Fabian both smiled, knowing as they did that CUT was a slang expression for a vulva and knowing as they did that vulvas are useful in making big pees.

As Sir Toby had hoped, Malvolio began to read the letter out loud: “*To the unknown beloved, this letter, and my good wishes.*”

Malvolio said, “These are the exact phrases that she uses while writing.”

He looked at the sealing wax and saw the picture of Lucrece, a Roman woman who had committed suicide after being raped by an Etruscan King’s son, imprinted in the wax. The Italians then overthrew the Etruscan King and established the Roman Republic.

Malvolio said, “This is more proof that Olivia wrote this letter. It is sealed with her seal. But to whom is this letter written?”

Fabian said, “He will take the bait — and he will take it hook, line, and sinker.”

Malvolio read out loud, “*Jove knows I love:*

“*But who?*

“*Lips, do not move;*

“*No man must know.*”

Malvolio said, “‘*No man must know.*’ What follows this line? The meter of poetry now changes! I wonder if Olivia is referring to me.”

“Hang yourself now, you stinking badger,” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio read out loud, “*I may command where I adore;*

“*But silence, like the knife of Lucrece,*

“*With bloodless stroke my heart does gore:*

“*M, O, A, I does rule my life.*”

Fabian said, “This riddle uses ridiculously lofty language!”

“Maria is an excellent woman, I believe,” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio said, “‘*M, O, A, I does rule my life.*’ Hmm, let’s think about this.”

Fabian said, “Maria has mixed a drink of poison for him.”

“And he is eager to drink it,” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio said, “‘*I may command where I adore.*’ Why, Olivia may command me. I am her servant. She is the lady who gives me orders. Why, the meaning of the sentence is obvious to any reasonable mind. There is no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this sentence.”

He looked at the letter and said, “What about the end: ‘*M, O, A, I does rule my life*’? Here is an alphabetical puzzle. What is its meaning? If only these letters related to me! Think! M, O, A, I.”

Sir Toby said, “Malvolio is like a hunting dog trying to find a scent. But the scent is cold.”

Fabian said, “The dog will find the scent again and howl as if it has made a great discovery. Malvolio will follow the false scent, although the true scent actually stinks like a fox and Malvolio should be able to easily find it.”

Malvolio said, “M. Malvolio. M is the first letter of my name!”

Fabian said, "Didn't I say that he would find the false scent again? He is good at picking up scents."

Malvolio said, "That explains M. But there is no consistent explanation of the following letters. A should be the next letter, but O is the letter that actually follows M."

Fabian said, "And O shall be Malvolio's end, I hope. Let an O — a hangman's noose — be around his neck."

"Aye, or I'll beat him," Sir Toby said, "and make him cry, 'Oh!'"

Malvolio said, "M, O, A, I. An 'I' comes at the end."

Fabian said, "Aye. If you had an eye in the back of your head, you might see more detraction and loss of reputation at your heels than good fortune in front of you."

Malvolio said, "M, O, A, I: This puzzle is not like the former puzzle, and yet, I can make it solvable — all of these letters are in my name. But there is more. At this point, the letter contains prose."

Malvolio read out loud, "*If this letter should fall into your hands, think. In my good fortune I am above you in social class; but be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. Your Fates have generously opened their hands; let your passion and courage embrace them. And, to accustom yourself to what you are likely to be, cast off your humble ways and appear fresh and new. Be disagreeable with a kinsman, be surly with servants; let your tongue speak about important matters; make yourself act eccentrically. Thus the woman who sighs with love for you advises you. Remember who complimented your yellow stockings, and who wished to see you wearing garters that cross your leg. Remember, I say. Do these things. Your fortune is made — if you want it to be made. If you do not, do everything the way that you have always done them and make no change in your life. Go ahead and stay a steward, be a companion to servants, and show that you are not worthy to touch the fingers of Fortune. Farewell from a woman who now commands you but would like you to command her. THE FORTUNATE UNHAPPY.*"

Malvolio paused and then said, "Everything is clear. Daylight and open country cannot reveal anything more. The meaning of this letter is straightforward, and I will do as it says. I will be proud, I will read authors who write about politics, I will treat Sir Toby with contempt, and I will stop being the companions of servants; in short, I will do everything to the letter that this letter tells me to do."

He added, "I do not now fool myself. I am not letting my imagination deceive me. Everything points to this conclusion: Olivia loves me. She did compliment my yellow stockings recently, and she did praise my legs when they were cross-gartered. In this letter, she declares her love for me, and she tells me how she wishes me to act. I thank my good fortune. I am happy. I will do as she wishes. I will immediately be distant and aloof and proud. I will dress in yellow stockings and be cross-gartered, just as quickly as I can change my clothing. Jove and good fortune be praised!"

He looked at the letter and said, "Here is a postscript: 'You must know who I am. If you accept my love, show it by smiling. Your smiles are becoming; therefore, please smile whenever you are in my presence, my sweet dear.'"

Malvolio added, "Jove, I thank you. I will smile. I will do everything that Olivia will have me do."

Malvolio left the garden.

An impartial observer — and everyone else — might think, *Malvolio did not correctly solve the puzzle of M, O, A, I. True enough. But what is the correct solution to the puzzle? What if M, O, A, and I are — in part — an anagram? We certainly have seen Malvolio and the people spying on him when he finds the letter in Olivia's garden talk about rearranging the letters. Malvolio tells us that A should go after M, and Fabian mentions O and end. What do we get when we rearrange the letters and put I at the beginning? I M A O. I am A and O. The O goes at the end, and the end is Omega. If the end is Omega, what is the beginning? The beginning is Alpha. Therefore, I am Alpha and Omega. This is Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." These are words — and letters — that apply to God, but Malvolio is applying them to himself. Revelation is the last book of the Bible. What is the first book of the Bible? Genesis. What is the most important part of Genesis? The Fall. The serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Eve — and Adam — ate the fruit, committing the sin of pride. They placed themselves before God and disobeyed the command of God. The sin of pride is regarding oneself as the center of the universe, as being more important than anything or anybody else. Pride is a deadly sin, and it is the foundation of the other deadly sins:*

1) *Pride.*

*I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.*

2) *Envy.*

*I am the center of the universe, so I ought to have it all, and if you have something I want, I envy you.*

3) *Wrath.*

*Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.*

4) *Sloth.*

*I am the center of the universe, so I don't have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.*

5) *Avariciousness and Prodigality.*

*I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every dime I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.*

6) *Gluttony.*

*I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these two extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward to myself for being so fabulous.*

7) Lust.

*I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it's OK if I lie to get someone in bed and never call in the days and weeks afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.*

*Malvolio's name is Mal Volio — "I wish badly." Proud people wish badly.*

*The rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden led to the first sin committed by human beings. Previously, an angel had committed the first sin by supernatural beings.*

*That proud supernatural being is Lucifer, who put himself before God and rebelled against him. Because of this sin, Lucifer is condemned to spend eternity shackled in the darkness of Hell. Adam and Eve committed the original sin of human beings. Lucifer committed the original sin of supernatural beings.*

*If Malvolio were a better person, he would solve the puzzle of I M A O correctly and he would realize that he is guilty of the sin of pride. He wants to marry Olivia, but he wants to marry her because doing so will improve his position in society. He does not want to marry Olivia because he can make her happy. He loves Olivia's social standing and her wealth.*

*Malvolio regards himself as being more important than Olivia: I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia because doing so will make ME happy. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia for her social standing and money. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia although I do not love her.*

*If Malvolio were a more intelligent person, he would realize that he on the verge of a fall just like Adam and Eve were when the serpent tempted them in the Garden of Eden or like Lucifer when he rebelled against God.*

*Malvolio is not morally good enough or intelligent enough to correctly solve Maria's puzzle. He believes the letter that Maria wrote and he will be punished for believing it just like Lucifer was punished. However, the people judging him and punishing him are not God.*

*Maria and the others spying on Malvolio are also guilty of pride. They consider themselves better than Malvolio. They consider the entertainment they will get by watching Malvolio being manipulated into making a fool of himself is more valuable than Malvolio's future hurt feelings.*

*Fabian watched Malvolio walk away, and then he said, "I would not have missed this entertainment even if the Shah of Persia had offered me a pension of thousands of pounds."*

*"I could marry Maria as a reward for this practical joke," Sir Toby said.*

*Sir Andrew, who sometimes repeated whatever Sir Toby said, being incapable sometimes of figuring out something to say, said, "I could marry her, too."*

*Sir Toby said, "I would not even ask her for a dowry — except for another practical joke like this one."*

“Me, too,” Sir Andrew said.

Fabian said, “Here comes the trickster herself.”

Maria walked up to the three men.

Sir Toby asked, “May I kiss your feet?”

“May I, also?” Sir Andrew asked.

Sir Toby asked, “Would you like me to be your servant for the rest of my life?”

“And would you like me to be your lifelong servant?” Sir Andrew asked.

Sir Toby said, “Your practical joke has worked so well that Malvolio is living in a dream. When his bubble of a daydream bursts, he will go mad.”

“Tell me the truth,” Maria said. “Did my letter really work?”

“He took to the letter like a midwife takes to brandy,” Sir Toby said.

“If you want to see how the practical joke will work out,” Maria said, “watch Malvolio the next time he appears before Olivia. He will wear yellow stockings, and yellow is a color she hates. He will be cross-gartered, and that is a style she hates. He will smile constantly, and she will dislike that because she is now in a mood for melancholy. Malvolio will definitely make a fool of himself in front of her. If you wish to witness this, follow me.”

Earlier, Malvolio had said about Olivia, “She did compliment my yellow stockings recently, and she did praise my legs when they were cross-gartered.”

Possibly, Maria is lying about Olivia dislikes.

“I will follow you to the gates of Hell, you most excellent Devil of wit,” Sir Toby said.

“I’ll go, too,” Sir Andrew said.

They followed Maria into Olivia’s house.

## CHAPTER 3

### — 3.1 —

A little later, Viola walked into Olivia's garden, where she met Feste, who had a small drum — known as a tabor — hanging around his neck.

“God bless you and your music, friend,” Viola said. “Do you live by your drum?”

Feste replied, “No, sir, I live by the church.”

“Are you a member of the clergy?”

“No, sir, but I live by the church; for I live at my house, and my house stands by the church.”

“When I asked, ‘Do you live by your drum?’ I meant, ‘Do you make your living by playing your drum?’ I see that you are playing with language. You would say that the King lies by a beggar if a beggar dwells near him. But then you would make ‘lies by the beggar’ mean ‘sleeps with the beggar.’ Or you would say that the church stands by your drum, if the church is standing by — that is, located next to — your drum. But then you would have ‘stands by’ mean the church ‘is supported by’ your drum if you donate to the church some of the money your playing the drum earns for you. Or you would have ‘stands by’ mean the church ‘is supported by’ your drum if your drum leans against the church.”

“Well said, sir,” Feste replied. “We live in a wonderful age. A sentence is like a glove to a good wit. A good wit can turn a sentence inside out as easily as he can turn a glove inside out.”

“That’s the truth,” Viola said. “People who play with words can quickly make them wanton and undisciplined.”

“That’s why I wish that my sister had no name, sir,” Feste replied.

“Why is that?”

“Why, sir, her name is a word; and to play with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very untrustworthy now that they are used in legal documents.”

“Why can’t the words in legal documents be relied on?” Viola asked.

“To tell the truth, in order to answer your question I would have to use words, and words are so wanton and undisciplined that I am loath to try to talk sense with them,” Feste said.

“I believe that you are a merry fellow and care for nothing. You are carefree, and you don’t care what you say.”

“That’s not true,” Feste said. “I do care for something. I care for Olivia. In my heart, I do not care for you. If that means that I do not care for nothing, sir, then you should disappear because you are nothing to me. If you are bringing another unwelcome message from Orsino to Olivia, it would be best if you left.”

Viola had no intention of leaving, but she realized that Feste was witty.

“I think I recognize you now,” Viola said, “Aren’t you the Lady Olivia’s fool?”

“No, indeed not, sir,” Feste replied. “The Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no fool, sir, until she is married. Fools are to husbands as oranges are to grapefruits; the husband is bigger and makes the bigger fool. Indeed, I am not Olivia’s fool — I am her corrupter of words.”

“I saw you recently at the palace of Duke Orsino.”

“Foolery, sir, walks around the world like the Sun does. Foolery and the Sun shine everywhere. Shouldn’t Orsino’s fool be with him as much as I am with Olivia? I think I saw your wisdom at the palace of Duke Orsino.”

“Whoa!” Viola said. “If you are going to call me a fool, I will have no more to do with you. Wait. Here is a coin for you.”

Feste took the coin and said, “The next time Jove receives a delivery of hair, may he give you a beard.”

“To tell the truth, I am almost sick because I don’t have a beard,” Olivia replied.

*That’s true, she thought. I love and want Orsino, and he has a beard. I certainly don’t want a beard that grows on my chin.*

She asked Feste, “Is Olivia inside?”

He held out the coin and said, “Would not a pair of these breed, sir?”

“They would, indeed, if kept together and invested wisely.”

“I would like to play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, and introduce this coin, whose name is Troilus, sir, to a coin named Cressida.”

Troilus and Cressida were two Trojans who had had a famous love affair with Pandarus as their go-between.

Viola gave him a second coin and said, “I understand you, sir. It is well begged. Here is a female coin to go with the male coin I gave you earlier.”

Earlier, Feste had made a jab at Viola when he said that he did not care for her. Now, Viola returned the jab by calling Feste a beggar. (Professional fools are not beggars, even when they jest for tips.) Tit for tat, and Feste respected that — but he would make it clear that Cressida, and not he — was a beggar.

“I hope that my request for a second coin is not a big deal, sir,” Feste said, “Begging for a beggar is not wrong. It is said that Cressida became a beggar in her old age.”

A beggar’s begging is not wrong. It is the beggar’s vocation, and it is no sin to labor in one’s vocation.

Feste added, “To answer your question, Olivia is inside the house. I will tell the people inside that you are here and from where you have come. Who you are and why you have come is not part of what I know. I would say that I’m out of my element, but that’s a cliché.”

Feste left to tell Olivia that a young man wanted to talk to her.

Viola respected Feste’s wit, but she was loyal to Orsino. Feste respected Viola’s wit, but he was loyal to Olivia.

She said to herself about Feste, “This fellow is wise enough to play the fool; and to do that well requires a kind of wit. He must observe the mood of those with whom he jests. He must observe their social standing and the occasion. He can’t be like a hungry hawk that seizes every opportunity to hunt; instead, Feste must seize every *proper* opportunity to get what he wants, which means that he must know when and when not to make a joke. His is a skill as full of labor as the art of a wise man. A fool’s folly is full of wit and wisdom, but a wise man who falls into folly loses his reputation for wit and wisdom.”

Viola also thought about Feste calling her a fool. Normally, that is an insult, but when a professional fool — a wise fool — calls you a fool, and even refers to you as “your wisdom,” perhaps it ought to be regarded as a compliment.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew walked up to Viola.

“God bless you, gentleman,” Sir Toby said to Viola.

She replied, “And you, sir.”

Sir Andrew said to her, “*Dieu vous garde, monsieur,*” which is French for “God keep you, sir.”

Viola replied, “*Et vous aussi; votre serviteur,*” which is French for “And you, too; at your service.”

Sir Andrew, who did not know French well, replied, “I hope, sir, you are; and I am yours.”

Sir Toby’s language could be odd. He said to Viola, “Will you encounter the house? My niece is desirous that you should enter, if your business is with her.”

Viola replied, “I am bound for your niece, sir. She is the list — the destination — of my voyage.”

“Taste your legs, sir; put them to motion,” Sir Toby said.

“My legs do better understand me, sir — they stand under me — than I understand what you mean by bidding me to ‘taste’ my legs,” Viola replied.

“I mean, to go, sir, to enter,” Sir Toby said.

*I understand now, Viola thought. “Taste” is a word for the verb “test.” I have heard of tasting valor, but I have never before now heard of tasting legs. Also, Sir Toby made a malapropism when he said “encounter” rather than “enter.” Another way for words to be unmanageable is for them to be misused. Sir Toby is trying to be fancy in his word choice, and he is making mistakes. Yet another way for words to be unmanageable is when someone does not understand a language well.*

She replied, “I would answer you with gait and entrance, but we are forestalled. I see Olivia and Maria walking toward us.”

Viola said to Olivia, “Most excellent accomplished lady, may the Heavens rain perfume on you!”

Sir Andrew appreciated Viola’s choice of words. He said to himself, “‘Rain perfume’ — well said.”

Viola said to Olivia, “My message is for only your receptive and attentive ears.”

Sir Andrew said to himself, “‘Rain perfume,’ ‘receptive,’ and ‘attentive’ — I intend to memorize all three and have them ready to use in conversation.”

Olivia said, “Leave me and this young man alone, and shut the door to the garden.”

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria all left, leaving Viola and Olivia alone in the garden.

Olivia said to Viola, “Give me your hand, sir.”

Viola gave Olivia her hand, and she bowed and then let go of Olivia’s hand.

Viola said, “I give you my duty, madam, and my most humble service.”

“What is your name?”

“Cesario is my name, and I am your servant, fair princess.”

“You are my servant! The world has never been happy ever since fake humility was called flattery. You are Duke Orsino’s servant, young man.”

“Count Orsino is your servant, and therefore what is his is yours. Your servant’s servant is your servant, madam.”

“As for Duke Orsino, I never think about him. As for his thoughts, I wish that they were blank rather than filled with me.”

“Madam, I have come to urge you to like him.”

“Please, I beg you to never speak again about him to me. However, if you would like to undertake another suit — your own — I had rather hear you do that than to hear the music from the spheres.”

According to the medieval conception of the universe, the center of the universe is the Earth, but nine spheres surround it: the seven spheres of seven planets, the sphere of the firmament, and then the Primum Mobile, which imparts motion to the other spheres. The firmament is where the constellations and fixed stars are embedded. (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn are called “wandering stars” or “erring stars” because they wander in the sky; the word “planet” comes from a Greek term and means “wandering star.” One meaning of “err” is “wander.”) When the crystalline spheres move, they create music.

Viola was shocked: “Dear lady!”

“Let me speak, please. After you first visited me — and enchanted me — I sent a servant after you to give you a ring. Thus did I wrong myself, my servant, and, I fear, you. I wronged myself by lying, I wronged my servant, Malvolio, by making him lie, and I wronged you by implying that you had thrown the ring at me. You must have a harsh interpretation of my deed and of myself because I tried to force the ring on you with shameful cunning. You knew that the ring did not belong to you. What must you think?”

“Haven’t you been setting me and my honor at the stake like a bear and tormenting me? Haven’t you been cruelly laughing at me for my so passionate actions? I have revealed enough

of myself to you that you, with your intelligence and perception, understand me. Only a thin piece of gauze covers my heart, which I know that you can see. So, let me hear you speak.”

Viola, who knew that Olivia was passionately in love with her, said, “I pity you.” She also put Olivia’s ring on a piece of furniture.

Olivia replied, “Pity is a step toward love.”

“No, it is not a step toward love,” Viola replied. “It is common knowledge that often we pity our enemies.”

“Well, then I can smile again because my enemy shows me pity,” Olivia said. “How proud the poor are! The poor and the deprived such as myself are so quick to grasp at straws that might bring them a little happiness! If one should be a prey, how much better it is to fall before the lion than the wolf! In other words, although you do not love me, at least I fell in love with a man who is worthy to be loved. I have been destroyed by a noble enemy rather than an ignoble one.”

Olivia also thought, *You, Cesario, are only a servant and I am a Countess, but you show that you are proud by rejecting my love for you.*

The clock struck.

Olivia said, “The clock criticizes me for wasting time. Do not be afraid, young man — I cannot force you to marry me. However, when your wit and youth have arrived at maturity, your wife is likely to reap a proper man.”

Olivia pointed to the garden gate and said, “There lies your way, due west.”

“Then westward-ho!” Viola replied. “May God bless you and give peace of mind to you.”

She added, “Do you have a message for me to take to Orsino?”

Olivia did not speak, and Viola turned to go.

“Wait,” Olivia said. “Please, tell me what you think of me.”

“I think that you do think you are not what you are,” Viola said.

This sentence is ambiguous. Viola meant this: *You do not think that you are in love with a woman, but you are.*

Olivia, however, understood the sentence to mean this: *You do not think that you are behaving beneath your social class — you are a Countess who is in love with a gentleman servant — but you are.*

Olivia replied, “If I think so, I think the same of you.”

By this, she meant that she believed that Viola was of a higher social class than she was pretending to be.

This was true. As Cesario, of course, Viola was working as a gentleman servant, but she was born into a higher class.

Viola said, “Then know that you think rightly: I am not what I am.”

Viola meant that yes, she was not what she was pretending to be. She meant that she was a woman pretending to be a man, but Olivia thought that Viola was talking about social class.

Olivia said, “I would you were as I would have you be!”

She meant this: *I wish that you would return my love!*

Viola replied, “Would that be an improvement? I wish that it would be. Right now I am your fool. You are wasting my time. You told me to leave, and then you told me to stay. You are treating me as if I were your fool. I must obey you because I represent Orsino and he would not want me to be rude to you and leave.”

Olivia thought, *Cesario looks beautiful when he’s angry and scornful! His lips show his anger and contempt! He is showing that he is angry at me, but that increases my love for him. Guilt due to murder cannot conceal itself, and neither can love. Love’s night is noon. Love tries to hide itself, but it is as obvious as the noon Sun. I have made Cesario angry, but even now I cannot conceal my love for him.*

Olivia said to Viola, “Cesario, by the roses of the spring, by virginity, honor, truth, and everything, I love you so much that despite all your pride — and you show your pride by rejecting me — neither my intelligence nor my reason can hide my passion for you. Don’t think that you ought not to love me because I have pursued you. Instead, reason this way: Love sought is good, but love given unsought is better.”

Viola replied, “I swear by my innocence and by my youth that I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth, and that no woman has ever been or ever will be mistress of it, except for me. And so goodbye, good madam. I will never again bring to you Orsino’s tearful love messages that so deplore you.”

“Please come here again,” Olivia said. “Perhaps you may move a heart, which now hates, to like his love.”

Olivia was deliberately ambiguous, hoping that Viola would misunderstand what she had said.

She hoped that Viola would think that she had meant this: *Perhaps you may move my heart, which now hates Orsino, to like his love for me.*

But Olivia actually meant this: *Perhaps you may move your own heart, which now hates me, to like Orsino’s love, who is me.*

### — 3.2 —

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian were meeting in a room in Olivia’s house.

Sir Andrew, who was angry, said, “No, I will not stay in this house a second longer.”

“Your reason, dear venomous one,” Sir Toby said, “give us your reason.”

Fabian said, “Yes, you must tell us your reason.”

Sir Andrew said to Sir Toby, “I saw your niece treating Duke Orsino’s young messenger much better than she has ever treated me. I saw them together in the garden.”

Sir Toby asked, “Did my niece see you looking at her and Duke Orsino’s young messenger?”

“She saw me as plainly as I see you now,” Sir Andrew replied.

Fabian, who was as eager and willing as Sir Toby to make a fool of Sir Andrew by playing a trick on him, said, “This is evidence that Olivia loves you.”

“Are you trying to make a fool of me?” Sir Andrew asked.

“I can prove that Olivia loves you by using judgment and reason,” Fabian said.

Fabian did not mention truth.

Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew, “Judgment and reason have been part of the grand jury since before Noah was a sailor.”

Fabian said, “Olivia showed favor to Orsino’s young messenger in your sight only to make you jealous, to exasperate you, to awaken your sleeping valor, to put fire in your heart and brimstone in your passion. You should then have accosted her; and with some excellent jests, as brilliant as coins fresh from the mint, you should have made the youth speechless. She wanted you to do that, but you did not. You have wasted a golden opportunity. Now you have sailed into the north of Olivia’s regard, and she regards you frostily, as if you were hanging like an icicle on a Dutchman’s beard, unless you redeem yourself by doing some praiseworthy deed either of bravery or cunning.”

Sir Andrew replied, “If it must be done, it must be done with a brave act because I hate cunning. I would rather be a heretic than a cunning schemer.”

“Why, then build your fortunes upon the basis of bravery,” Sir Toby said. “Challenge Orsino’s young messenger to a fight. Wound him in eleven places. My niece shall take note of it; assure yourself that nothing in the world is better than a report of valor in getting a woman to love you.”

Fabian said, “There is no other way to proceed than this, Sir Andrew.”

“Will either of you carry my challenge to Orsino’s young messenger?”

“Go and write your challenge in a martial hand,” Sir Toby said. “Be fierce and brief. Your letter does not need to be cunning, but it ought to be eloquent and filled with lies. Talk down to him and insult him. Write as many lies as will lie in your paper, no matter how big the sheet of paper is. Even if your paper is about three meters square — as big as a sheet that fits the bed of Ware in England — fill it with lies. Although you write with the pen of a goose — one made from a goose feather — let your ink be mixed with gall.”

Sir Toby thought, *Yes, Sir Andrew will be writing with the pen of a goose — he is a goose.*

“Where shall I find you after I have written the challenge?”

Sir Toby replied, “We will call on you in your bed-chamber. Go now and write.”

Sir Andrew left to write his challenge.

Fabian said, “He is a dear puppet to you, Sir Toby. You can manipulate him so easily.”

“I have been dear — expensive — to him, lad,” Sir Toby said. “I have spent approximately two thousand of his ducats. His income is three thousand ducats per year.”

“The letter he writes will be remarkable. Are you actually thinking of delivering the letter to Orsino’s young messenger?”

Fabian thought, *We don’t want to carry the joke too far.*

“Of course I will,” Sir Toby said. “If I don’t, never again believe a word I say. In the meantime, find Orsino’s young messenger and do whatever you can to make him ready to fight Sir Andrew. I think that oxen and heavy ropes will not be able to get Sir Andrew and the young messenger together so that they can fight. If you ever see Sir Andrew shirtless, look at his back. If he doesn’t have a yellow streak there, I swear that I will become a cannibal.”

Fabian said, “Sir Andrew’s opponent, the young messenger, bears in his face no sign of fierceness. He does not look like a fighter.”

Maria walked up to Sir Toby and Fabian.

Sir Toby said to Fabian, “Look, the youngest wren of nine is walking toward us.”

He was commenting on Maria’s small size. According to folklore, the smallest bird hatches last.

Maria said to them, “If you want to laugh so hard that you will have stitches in your side, come with me. The fool Malvolio has become a heathen and renounced Christianity. No one who wants to be saved by believing the right things could ever believe the absurdities that I put in my letter — and act them out! He is doing everything that my letter told him to do. He is wearing yellow stockings.”

“Is he cross-gartered?” Sir Toby asked.

“Yes, he is, and that style looks abominable,” Maria said. “He looks like a pedant who keeps a school in the church. He thinks that he looks stylish, but he looks old-fashioned and rustic and obsolete. I have dogged him — I have followed him as if I were his murderer and were going to ambush him. He is obeying every point of the letter that I dropped to betray him. He smiles his face into more lines than is in a new map with the newest island created by underwater volcanoes. You have never seen such a funny sight as his smiling face. I can hardly keep myself from throwing things at him. I know that Olivia will hit him. If she does, he will smile and think that she likes him.”

Sir Toby said, “Lead us to where Malvolio is.”

### — 3.3 —

On a street in a town in Illyria, Sebastian and Antonio were talking.

Sebastian said, “I did not want to trouble you, but since you enjoy helping me, I will no longer nag you to stop.”

“I could not stay behind and let you travel alone,” Antonio said. “My desire, which is sharper than the point of a steel spur, spurred me on to follow and find you. I did not want just to see you, although that desire would have made me take an even longer voyage. Instead, I was worried about what might happen to you during your travels. You do not know this territory, which can be rough and inhospitable to an unguided and friendless stranger. My deep

friendship for you, reinforced by my fear of what might happen to you, led me to set forth and follow you.”

“My kind Antonio,” Sebastian said, “I can make no other answer but thanks, and thanks, and thanks again. All too often good deeds are thanked with words and not money, but if my wealth were as great as my sense of gratitude to you, you would receive better treatment than I can now give you.”

He added, “What shall we do now? Shall we go and see the sights of this town?”

“Let us do that tomorrow, sir,” Antonio said. “It is best to first go and see about our lodging.”

“I am not tired, and it is a long time until night. Please, let us satisfy our eyes with the memorials and the things of fame that make this town renowned.”

“Please pardon me,” Antonio said. “I do not without danger walk these streets. Once, in a sea-fight, I fought against Duke Orsino’s galleys and did such deeds of note that if I were arrested here, I would be in serious trouble.”

“Do you kill a great number of his people?”

“No,” Antonio said. “That did not happen, although the time and reason of the quarrel could have led to great bloodshed. This quarrel could have been patched up by now. All that was needed to do was to return to Duke Orsino’s people what we had taken from them. In fact, most of us did that because we wanted to be able to do business with Illyria. I alone did not return what I had taken. Because of that, if I am arrested in Illyria, I shall pay a heavy price.”

“Don’t be conspicuous in this country.”

“I don’t intend to be,” Antonio said. “Wait, Sebastian, here is my wallet and money. The best place to lodge in this town is in the south suburbs at the Elephant Inn. You go ahead and take in the sights here and learn about the town; I will go to the Elephant and order our meals and arrange for our lodging. You will find me at the Elephant.”

“Why did you give me your wallet and money to hold for you?”

“Perhaps as you are wandering the town, you will see some trifle that you would like to buy. Your own money is not sufficient, I think, for unnecessary purchases.”

“I will be your money-bearer and leave you for an hour.”

“I will be at the Elephant Inn.”

“I will meet you there.”

— 3.4 —

Olivia and Maria talked together in Olivia’s garden.

Olivia said to herself, “I have sent a servant after Orsino’s young messenger, Cesario, to make him come back and see me. What kind of food should I serve him? What gift should I give him? Young men are bought — won over with gifts — more often than begged or borrowed.”

She noticed Maria looking at her, and then she said to herself, “I am too loud.”

She said in her normal voice to Maria, "Where is Malvolio? He is serious and respectable, and he is well suited to be a servant to me now."

She thought, *Right now, I am hopelessly in love with someone who does not love me.*

She asked again, "Where is Malvolio?"

"He is coming, madam, but he is behaving very strangely," Maria replied. "He seems to be possessed by the Devil, madam."

"Why, what's the matter with him? Does he rave?"

"No, madam, he does nothing but smile. I advise that your ladyship have a bodyguard near you when Malvolio comes. I am sure that the man's wits are tainted."

"Go and tell him to come here."

Maria exited.

Olivia said to herself, "I am as mad — as insane — as he is, if sad madness and merry madness are equally madness. Malvolio does nothing but smile, as his is a merry madness. I cannot smile, as mine is a sad madness."

Maria and Malvolio walked into the garden.

Olivia asked Malvolio, who was indeed smiling, and who continued to smile, "How are you, Malvolio?"

Malvolio replied, "Sweet lady," and chuckled.

"Why are you smiling?" Olivia asked. "I sent for you on serious business."

This was true. She wanted to ask him how she should entertain Cesario.

"Serious, lady?" Malvolio said. "I could be serious. This cross-gartering does keep my blood from flowing freely in my legs, but if the cross-gartering pleases the eyes of a certain person, then I say, as does the song, 'Please one, and please all.'"

The theme of the song was that all women want the same thing. The song may mean that all women want their own way — or that all women want something else.

"How are you, man?" Olivia asked. "What is the matter with you?"

"My mind is not black, but my legs are yellow," Malvolio replied.

He added, "It did come to his hands, and commands shall be executed."

This meant, *I did receive your letter, and I shall follow the instructions you wrote in it.*

He then said, "I think we do know the sweet Roman hand that is Italian calligraphy."

This meant, *Both of us know that the handwriting in the letter is your handwriting.*

Olivia asked, "Do you want to go to bed, Malvolio?"

"To bed?" Malvolio replied.

He sang, *“Yes, sweetheart, and I will come to you.”*

Olivia was shocked: “May God help you!”

Malvolio blew her some kisses.

Olivia said, “Why do you keep on smiling and kissing your hand?”

“How are you, Malvolio?” Maria asked.

Following the letter’s instructions to cast off lower-class acquaintances, Malvolio said, “Do you think that I am going to speak to you? Do nightingales talk to crows?”

“Why are you talking so boldly to my lady, Olivia?” Maria asked.

Malvolio quoted the letter: *“Be not afraid of greatness.”*

He added, “That was well written.”

Olivia asked, “What do you mean by that, Malvolio?”

“*Some are born great,*” he replied.

Olivia asked, “What?”

“*Some achieve greatness.*”

“What are you saying?”

“*And some have greatness thrust upon them.*”

“Heaven help you!”

“*Remember who complimented your yellow stockings.*”

“Your yellow stockings!” Olivia said.

“*And wished to see thee cross-gartered.*”

“Cross-gartered!”

“*Do these things. Your fortune is made — if you want it to be made.*”

“Did you say, ‘Your fortune is mad’? Are you saying that I am mad?” Olivia asked.

“*If you do not, do everything the way that you have always done them and make no change in your life. Go ahead and stay a steward.*”

“You are suffering from midsummer madness.”

One of Olivia’s servants arrived and said, “Madam, I have brought back with me Duke Orsino’s young messenger — with great difficulty. I could scarcely convince him to see you. He is now waiting for you.”

“I will come to him right away,” Olivia said.

She said to Maria, “This fellow needs to be looked after and cared for. Where is my uncle Toby? Have some of my servants take good care of Malvolio. I would not have anything bad

happen to him for half of my dowry.”

Olivia and Maria left, leaving Malvolio behind, alone in the garden.

Malvolio said to himself, “So, Olivia, do you understand me now? Do you know now that I will follow the instructions in your letter and be the kind of man you wrote that you wanted me to be?”

Malvolio believed that Olivia had pretended to be shocked at his behavior because Maria was present.

He added, “No less a man than a knight — Sir Toby — to look after me! This is part of Olivia’s plan as recounted in the letter. She is sending Sir Toby to me so that I can be rude to him. She wrote about that in her letter: ‘Your Fates have generously opened their hands; let your passion and courage embrace them. And, to accustom yourself to what you are likely to be, cast off your humble ways and appear fresh and new. Be disagreeable with a kinsman, be surly with servants; let your tongue speak about important matters; make yourself act eccentrically.’ She also wrote down the manner of how I should look: a serious face, a dignified deportment, a slow manner of speech, dressing like a distinguished gentleman, and so forth. I have gotten her! But this is Jove’s doing, and may Jove make me thankful! When she went away just now, she said, ‘This fellow needs to be looked after and cared for.’ She said ‘fellow,’ not Malvolio nor my job title, but ‘fellow.’ She is referring to me as an equal. Why, everything is coming together! Nothing — not even the tiniest thing or the tiniest part of a thing — can come between success and me! I have no obstacles and no impediments between success and me! I will marry Olivia! Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.”

Maria walked into the room, bringing with her Sir Toby and Fabian.

Sir Toby asked, “Where is he, in the name of sanctity?”

Sir Toby was going to pretend that Malvolio was possessed by demons, so now he pretended to fortify himself for the encounter by invoking sanctity.

He said, “If all the Devils of Hell be drawn together in a bunch, and Legion — the name of a group of Devils — himself has possessed Malvolio, yet I will speak to him.”

“Here he is,” Fabian said.

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “How are you, sir? How are you, man?”

The letter had instructed Malvolio to cast off base acquaintances and to be rude to a kinsman — and if he married Olivia, Sir Toby would be his kinsman — and so he replied, “Go away, I don’t want to speak with you. Let me enjoy my privacy. Go away.”

Maria said, “Listen to how spookily the fiend possessing him speaks! Didn’t I tell you that he is possessed? Sir Toby, my lady wants you to take care of him.”

Malvolio said to himself, “Does she now?”

Sir Toby said to Maria and Fabian, “Quiet, please. We must deal gently with Malvolio.”

He asked Malvolio, “How are you? How are you doing? Defy the Devil, who is inside you. Renounce him! Remember, the Devil is our enemy and an enemy to all Humankind.”

“Do you even know what you are saying?” Malvolio replied.

Maria said to Sir Toby, “You spoke ill of the Devil — look at how badly Malvolio takes it! Pray to God that Malvolio is not bewitched!”

Fabian said, “Carry a sample of Malvolio’s urine to the wise woman so she can analyze it.”

“Good idea,” Maria said, “and it shall be done tomorrow morning, I promise. My lady would not lose Malvolio for more than I can say.”

“What are you saying!” Malvolio said.

“Oh, Lord!” Maria replied.

“Please, be quiet,” Sir Toby said, “This is not the way to act in front of Malvolio. Can’t you see that you are agitating him? Let me be alone with him.”

“Treat him gently,” Fabian said. “The fiend inside Malvolio is vicious and will not allow himself to be roughly treated.”

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “How are you, bawcock — my fine fellow! How are you doing, my chuck?”

“Sir!” Malvolio said, resentful about being talked down to and called silly and childish names.

“Bidly, come with me,” Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “What, man! A dignified man ought not to play childish games with Satan. Satan is a dirty and dishonest coalman — hang him!”

“Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby,” Maria said. “Get him to pray.”

“You want me to say my prayers, hussy!” Malvolio said.

“No, Malvolio will not say his prayers,” Maria said. “He is possessed by a Devil who cannot stand godliness.”

“Go and hang yourselves, all of you!” Malvolio said. “You are idle and shallow things: I am not of your element — I am superior to you! You shall learn more later.”

He left.

Sir Toby said, “Is it really true that our trick is working so well?”

Fabian said, “If this were played upon a stage right now, I would condemn it as an improbable fiction.”

Sir Toby said, “He completely and totally believes that Olivia wrote the letter!”

Maria said, “Let us quickly continue the trick. Soon our joke will become known, and it will be spoiled.”

“Should we do that?” Fabian asked. “What if he really and truly becomes insane?”

Maria said, “The house will be quieter.”

She meant that she would no longer have to listen to Malvolio’s criticisms of her. The house would likely become noisier with no one to at least attempt to restrain Sir Toby’s late-night

parties. Also, if Malvolio were to become insane, he would likely be locked up in a dark room, where he would howl. The dark room would be in a place where few people, if any, could hear him.

Sir Toby said, “Come on. We will have Malvolio tied up and placed in a dark room — the standard treatment for treating insanity. Olivia already believes that Malvolio is insane, and so we can continue to treat Malvolio however we like until we get tired of this joke and show mercy to him. When we get tired of laughing at him, we will let our trick become known by all and crown you, Maria, as a finder of madmen.”

He saw Sir Andrew coming toward him and said, “Look who’s coming.”

“Here is more merriment,” Fabian said.

Sir Andrew came to them with his letter in his hand and said, “Here is the challenge — read it. I promise that vinegar and pepper are in it.”

“Is it so saucy?” Fabian joked. “Saucy” means both spiced like a sauce and insulting.

Sir Andrew, who failed to get the joke, said, “Yes, it is, I promise you that. Read it.”

Sir Toby said, “Give it to me.”

He read out loud, “*Youth, whatever else you are, you are a scurvy fellow.*”

Fabian commented, “That is good, and valiant. It shows courage and determination.” He would praise the letter no matter how silly it got.

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Don’t wonder at or be surprised by what I call you. I will not tell you why I call you that.*”

“This is a good note,” Fabian said. “It keeps you on the right side of the law. You will not be sued.”

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*You have talked with the lady Olivia. I have seen that she treats you nicely. But you lie in your throat — that is not why I am writing you and challenging you to fight me.*”

If Cesario were lying in his throat when he talked to Olivia, he would be lying when he said that he did not love her.

Fabian said, “Very brief, and very good sense.” To Sir Toby, he whispered, “Sense — less.”

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*I will ambush you when you go home. If it should happen that you kill me —*”

“Good,” Fabian said.

Sir Andrew thought that Fabian meant that the half-sentence was well written, but Fabian was joking that it would be a good thing if Sir Andrew were killed.

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*If it should happen that you kill me, you kill me like a rogue and a villain.*”

Fabian enjoyed the sentence. The phrase “a rogue and a villain” was ambiguous. It could refer to Cesario — or to Sir Andrew.

Fabian said, “You are still keeping yourself on the right side of the law. Good work.”

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Fare thee well; and God have mercy upon one of our souls! He may have mercy upon mine, but my hope is better.*”

Fabian thought, *Funny! Sir Andrew thought that he was writing that he hopes to survive, but instead he wrote that he hopes to be damned to Hell.*

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Look to yourself. I am your friend, to the extent that you treat me as a friend.*”

Fabian thought, *Sir Andrew is trying to say that the quarrel is all Cesario’s fault.*

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Signed, Your sworn enemy, ANDREW AGUECHEEK.*”

Sir Toby said, “If this letter does not move Cesario, his legs must be paralyzed. I will give him your letter.”

“You will soon have a good opportunity to do that,” Maria said. “Cesario is talking to Olivia, and he will soon leave her.”

“Go, Sir Andrew,” Sir Toby said, “Keep watch for Cesario in the corner of the garden. Act like a sheriff’s official who arrests debtors. Don’t let him get away. As soon as you see him, draw your sword, and as you draw your sword, swear horribly. It often happens that a terrible oath, when pronounced boldly, gives a man a better reputation for courage than he would have gotten if he had actually fought. Go now.”

Sir Andrew said, “I’m really good at swearing,” and left.

Sir Toby said, “I will not give Cesario Sir Andrew’s letter. Cesario’s behavior shows that he is a young gentleman of intelligence and education. His employment as a go-between for Orsino and Olivia confirms that. Therefore, if Cesario were to read this letter, which is so silly, it would not terrify him because he would realize that its writer is an idiot. Instead, sir, I will deliver Sir Andrew’s challenge in person, orally. I will say that Sir Andrew is famous for his courage, and I will make Cesario believe — he is young, so he will believe whatever I tell him — that Sir Andrew is known for his rage, skill, fury, and impetuosity. Both Cesario and Sir Andrew will be so frightened of each other that a mere look from them will kill the other, just as the mythological creatures known as basilisks are said to be able to kill with a look.”

Olivia and Viola now entered the garden.

Fabian said, “Here come Cesario and your niece. Wait until he leaves, and then go after him.”

“In the meantime, I will think about what to say to Cesario,” Sir Toby said. “I will make up some horrible challenge for him.”

Sir Toby, Fabian, and Maria all left the garden, leaving Viola and Olivia alone. Sir Andrew watched the two from a distance.

Olivia said to Viola, “I have said too much to you and to your heart of stone, and I have unwisely risked my reputation. I may have done the wrong thing, but my fault is so headstrong

and powerful that it mocks reproof. I may have done the wrong thing in telling you that I love you, but I can't regret it."

"Your passion for me compels you to tell me that you love me," Viola said. "Orsino's passion for you compels him to send you the message that he loves you."

Olivia said, "Here, wear this jeweled miniature for me — it is my picture. Don't refuse it. It has no tongue to vex you. I ask that you come to me again tomorrow. You can ask nothing of me that I will deny you except that which honor requires me to deny you."

Viola did not take the locket. She said, "I ask you for nothing but this — that you love Orsino."

"How can I honorably give him that which I have already given to you?"

"I will return that gift to you."

Olivia said, "Well, come again tomorrow. Fare thee well. A fiend like you might bear my soul to Hell."

She went back inside her house.

Sir Toby and Fabian had been watching. Now they approached Viola.

"May God save you," Sir Toby said.

"And you, sir," Viola replied.

Sir Toby said to Viola, "Whatever skill you have in fencing, now is the time for you to use it. I don't know what wrongs you have done to him, but I know that he is full of hatred for you and that he is as bloodthirsty as a dog hunting its prey. He is waiting for you there in the corner of the garden. Unsheathe your rapier and quickly prepare to defend yourself because your enemy is quick, skillful, and deadly."

"You must be mistaken, sir," Viola replied. "I am sure that no man has any reason to quarrel with me. I can remember no offense that I have committed against any man."

Sir Toby replied, "Your enemy thinks otherwise, I assure you; therefore, if you value your life, be on guard because your enemy has youth, strength, skill, and anger."

"Please, sir, who is he?"

"He is a knight," Sir Toby said. "He became a knight not through his service in battle, but through domestic service. Nevertheless, he is a Devil when it comes to his private quarrels. He has killed three men and sent their souls to either Heaven or Hell. Right now, his anger at you is so implacable that it can be satisfied only by pangs of death and entombment in a burial vault. His motto is 'Kill, or be killed.'"

"I will go into the house and ask Olivia for someone to escort and protect me," Viola said. "I am no fighter. I have heard that some men start quarrels without cause on purpose as a test of their own and other men's courage. This man must be like that."

"Sir, no, he is not," Sir Toby said. "His anger comes from a very notable insult, and therefore you must fight him. I will not allow you to go back inside the house unless you first fight me,

and so you might as well fight him. Therefore, either draw your sword and fight him, or admit to your cowardice and never again wear a sword.”

“This is both rude and unintelligible,” Viola said. “I ask you to do me a favor: Find out from the knight what he thinks is my offense to him. Whatever it is, it is accidental and was not done on purpose.”

“I will do so,” Sir Toby said, “Mr. Fabian, stay by Cesario until my return.”

Sir Toby wanted Fabian to keep Cesario from either going into Olivia’s house or running away.

Sir Toby left to talk to Sir Andrew.

Viola said to Fabian, “Please, sir, do you know anything about this?”

“I know that the knight is angry at you — so angry that he wants to kill you — but I do not know the reason why.”

“What kind of man is he?”

“If you look at him, you would not think that he is a courageous fighter, but you will change your mind as soon as you see him in action. He is, indeed, sir, the most skillful, bloody, and deadly enemy that you could possibly have found in any part of Illyria. Will you walk with me to him and meet with him? I will make your peace with him if I can.”

“I would appreciate it if you can make peace,” Viola said. “I am the kind of person who would rather meet Sir Priest than Sir Knight. I don’t care what that makes people think about my courage.”

Meanwhile, Sir Toby was talking to Sir Andrew.

Sir Toby said, “Why, man, Cesario is a very Devil; I have not seen such a virago — he may look feminine, but he fights like a seasoned male warrior. I had a practice bout with him, and he thrust his sword at me with such a deadly motion, that I could not defend against it. When I thrust back at him, he thrust again and would have killed me a second time if our fight had been for real. He stabs you with his sword just as surely as your feet hit the ground they step on. They say that he has been fencer to the Shah of Persia.”

“Damn, I’ll not fight him,” Sir Andrew said.

Sir Toby said, “That’s a wise decision, but now Cesario is so angry that he will not be pacified. Look! Fabian can scarcely hold him yonder — Cesario is eager to kill you.”

Fabian was holding Viola’s arm as she struggled to escape and run away.

“If I had known he was so brave and so skillful in fencing, I would have seen him damned before I would have challenged him. If he will forget about it, I’ll give him my horse: Grey Capilet.”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Sir Toby said. “Stand here, and put on a show of bravery. I intend that this shall end without the loss of life.”

He walked toward Fabian and Viola, who were now walking toward him, and he thought, *I will end up riding Sir Andrew’s horse as well as riding Sir Andrew.*

Sir Toby said quietly to Fabian, “I can get Sir Andrew’s horse — he wants me to settle this quarrel. I have persuaded him that Cesario is a Devil when it comes to a fight.”

Fabian said quietly to Sir Toby, “Cesario is just as scared of Sir Andrew as Sir Andrew is of him. Cesario hyperventilates and looks pale, as if a bear were chasing him.”

Sir Toby said quietly to Viola, “There’s no remedy, sir. I can do nothing to stop this fight. He has thought about the reason for this quarrel, and he finds that it is now scarcely worth talking of, but he will fight you because he made an oath to fight you. Therefore, draw your sword, but be aware that he is fighting you only because of his oath, and he promises that he will not hurt you.”

Viola thought, *May God defend me! I am almost ready to tell them what part I lack of a man.*

Fabian advised Viola, “Give ground and retreat if you see him really furious.”

Sir Toby said quietly, “Come, Sir Andrew, you can’t get out of this. The gentleman will, for his honor’s sake, have one bout with you. By the rules of dueling, he cannot avoid fighting you, but as he is a gentleman and a soldier, he has promised me that he will not hurt you. Come on. It’s time to fight him.”

Sir Andrew said, “Pray God he keep his oath!”

Viola said, “It is against my will.”

Sir Andrew thought that Cesario meant that it was against his will that he keep his oath not to hurt Sir Andrew, but Viola meant that it was against her will that she was fighting at all.

Sir Andrew and Viola drew their swords. Antonio, who was looking for Sebastian, saw them from the street. Thinking that Viola was her brother, Sebastian, he entered Olivia’s garden and said to Sir Andrew, “Put up your sword. If this young gentleman has done any offence, I take the fault on me. If you have offended him, then I defy you for him.”

Sir Toby asked, “You, sir, who are you?”

Antonio replied, “I am one, sir, who for his deep friendship for this man will do more than you have heard me say to you that I will do.”

Angry that his fun had been interrupted, Sir Toby said, “If you are willing to fight in his place, I am willing to fight in Sir Andrew’s place.”

Sir Toby and Antonio drew their swords, but Fabian said to Sir Toby, “Wait! Here come two officers of the law!”

Sir Toby said to Antonio, “I won’t fight you right now, but I will after the officers leave.”

Viola said to Sir Andrew, “Please, sir, put your sword back in its scabbard, if you please.”

He replied, “Indeed, I will, sir, and, as for that which I promised you, I will be as good as my word: My horse will bear you easily and reins well.”

Viola was mystified by the comment, but everyone put their swords back in their scabbards.

The first officer pointed to Antonio and said, “This is the man; do your duty.”

The second officer said, "Antonio, I arrest you in the name of Duke Orsino."

"You have mistaken me for someone else," Antonio said.

The first officer replied, "No, not at all. I know your face well, though now you have no sea cap on your head. Take him away: He knows that I know who he is."

Antonio said to the officers, "I will go quietly."

Antonio said to Viola, "This is a result of my seeking you, but that is the way it is. I will face the consequences. I will either defend myself well or pay the penalty. However, I worry about you. What will you do now that my circumstances force me to ask you to return my money? I grieve much more about not being to help you than I grieve for myself."

Viola looked shocked at these words. She had never seen Antonio before.

Antonio said to her, "You seem shocked, but don't worry about me."

The second officer said, "Come on, sir. Let's go."

Antonio said to Viola, "I must ask you for some of that money."

Viola replied, "What money, sir? For the kindness you have given to me here, when you offered to fight this man for me, and in part because I pity you in your present trouble, I'll lend you some of the little money I have. I don't have much money, but I'll divide it with you. Here, take half of the money I have."

The amount of money was much less than what Antonio had given to Sebastian.

Antonio said to Viola, "Are you going to pretend not to know me? Is it possible that you will do that despite all that I have done for you? I have been arrested, and you ought to help me. Don't make me demean myself by reminding you of all the things that I have done to help you."

"Other than the good deed you have done for me just now, I know of nothing that you have done to help me," Viola said. "I do not know your voice or your face. I hate ingratitude more in a man than lying, vanity, babbling drunkenness, or any other vice that our weak human nature is susceptible to."

"Oh, my God!" Antonio said.

The second officer said, "Come, sir, let's go."

"Let me say a few words," Antonio said. "This youth whom you see here I snatched out of the jaws of death. He was half dead, but I lovingly nursed him back to health, and devoted myself to him because he looked so noble and good."

The first officer replied, "What is that to us? The time is passing. We need to leave!"

Antonio said, "But this man who seemed to be a god turns out to be a vile idol. You shame your good looks, Sebastian. The only real blemish is a blemish of the mind. The only real deformity is an unnatural hardness of heart:

"In nature there's no blemish but the mind;

“None can be called deformed but the unkind.

“Virtue and beauty are supposed to be synonymous, but some evil people are beautiful; they are like empty trunks whose exterior is decorated by the Devil:

“Virtue is beauty, but the beautiful evil

“Are empty trunks overflourished by the Devil.”

The first officer said, “Antonio is becoming insane. Let’s take him away! Come with us, Antonio.”

“Take me away,” Antonio said.

He left with the two officers of the law.

Viola said to herself, “He speaks with such passion that I think that he believes what he says. But I don’t.”

But then an explanation for Antonio’s words occurred to her: “I hope that it may be true. My brother, Sebastian, may still be alive, and Antonio may have thought that I am he.”

Sir Toby had been amused by Antonio’s couplets. He said, “Come with me, Sir Andrew and Fabian. We will say among ourselves a couplet or two of most sage saws.”

Viola said to herself, “Antonio said the name Sebastian. Whenever I look into a mirror, I see the image of my brother. We look almost exactly alike. We have the same features, the same face. We are dressed in the same style and color of clothing and with the same ornaments because I imitated him when I disguised myself as a man. If my brother is still alive, then tempests are kind and waves are fresh and filled with love. Unkind tempests and salt waves have foregone their ordinary attributes, if my brother is alive.”

Viola exited.

Sir Toby said, “Cesario is a very dishonest and paltry boy, and he is more cowardly than is a hare. Cesario shows that he is dishonorable because he is doing nothing to help his friend in need and even denies knowing him. As for Cesario’s cowardice, ask Fabian about it.”

“It is true,” Fabian said. “Cesario is a coward, a most devout coward. He is as devoted to cowardice as if it were his religion.”

Happy to hear that Cesario is a coward, Sir Andrew said, “By God, I’ll go after him and beat him.”

Sir Toby said, “Do that, Sir Andrew, fight him. Beat him soundly. But do not draw your sword against him.”

“I swear that I will —”

Sir Andrew left.

Fabian said to Sir Toby, “Come on. Let’s go and watch.”

“I bet you that nothing will come of it. Those two still will not fight.”

They followed Sir Andrew.

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Sebastian and Feste were arguing in front of Olivia's house. Olivia had sent Feste to find Cesario and bring him back to her, and Feste thought that Sebastian was Cesario.

Feste said, "Are you trying to make me believe that I was not sent for you?"

Sebastian replied, "Go away. You are a foolish fellow. Stay out of my way."

"You are certainly stubborn about denying who you are! No, I do not know who you are. No, my lady did not send me to get you. No, your name is not Cesario. No, my nose is not my nose. According to you, nothing that is so is so."

"Please, go and vent your folly somewhere else. You do not know me."

"Vent my folly! You have heard those words from some important and learned man and now you are applying them to a fool. Vent my folly! I am afraid that affectation and foppery will spread all over the world. Please, stop denying that you know me — we have met and talked before. Tell me what I shall vent to my lady, Olivia. Shall I vent to her that you are coming and will see her?"

"Please, foolish fellow, depart from me. Here is a coin for you. If you keep bothering me, I will give you worse payment."

"Truly, you have a generous hand," Feste said, remembering the two coins that Viola had given to him earlier. "These wise men who give fools money get for themselves a good reputation — if they keep on giving money for fourteen years."

Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, and Fabian now came running up to Sebastian. Like Feste, they thought that Sebastian was Cesario.

Sir Andrew said to Sebastian, "Now, sir, I have met you again."

He hit Sebastian and said, "That's for you."

Sebastian drew his dagger and hit an astonished Sir Andrew three times with the hilt, saying, "That's for you! And that! And that!"

He then said, "Are all the people in Illyria insane?"

Sir Toby did not want Sebastian to keep hitting his source of income. He said, "Stop, sir, or I'll throw your dagger over the house."

Things were starting to get serious, and Feste said, "I am going to tell Olivia all about this. I would not be in some of your shoes for two pennies."

Feste was loyal to Olivia and knew that she would want to know about fights on her property.

Sir Toby had grabbed hold of Sebastian. Sir Toby said, "Stop your fighting."

Sir Andrew said, "Let him go. I can fight him another way. I'll have an action of battery brought against him, if there is any law in Illyria. I struck him first, but that doesn't matter."

“Let go of me,” Sebastian said to Sir Toby.

“I will not let you go. Come, my young warrior, put up your dagger. You are too eager to fight.”

“I will be free from you,” Sebastian said.

He struggled, got himself free of Sir Toby’s grip, drew his sword, and said, “What will you do now? If you dare to keep on bothering me, draw your sword.”

“What!” Sir Toby said. “In that case, I must have an ounce or two of your impudent blood from you.”

Alerted by Feste, Olivia came running.

She said, “Sir Toby, stop! On your life, I order you to stop.”

Sir Toby stopped. Olivia gave him free room and board. He did not want to push her too far. He was her uncle, but she held the power and owned the property.

“Madam!” he said.

“Will it always be this way?” Olivia asked. “Ungracious wretch, you are fit only for the mountains and the barbarous caves, where good manners and etiquette are never learned or practiced. Get out of my sight!”

Olivia said to Sebastian, “Don’t be offended, dear Cesario.”

Noticing that Sir Toby was still present, she yelled at him, “Rudesby, lout, be gone!”

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian all left.

Olivia said to Sebastian, “Please, good friend, let yourself be guided by your calm wisdom and not by your anger at this uncivil and unjust attack against you. Come with me into my house, and I will tell you of many stupid and demeaning pranks that this ruffian has clumsily dreamed up. When you hear about them, you will probably smile at this one, too.”

Sebastian was hesitant about going with a strange woman, but Olivia said, “I will not allow you to do anything but go with me. Do not deny me my wish.”

Olivia believed that she was talking to Cesario. She also believed that her heart was not her own — she was in love with and had given her heart to Cesario.

She said to Sebastian, “Curse that ruffian. He made my heart jump like a hart that has been startled and driven out into the open by hunters.”

Sebastian thought, *How sweet and beautiful this woman is! But what is going on? Either I am mad, or else this is a dream. If it is a dream, then let me drink from the Lethe River of mythology so that I will forget what reality is and remain with this sweet and beautiful woman in my dream.*

Olivia said to him, “Please, come with me. I wish that you would allow me to guide you.”

Sebastian said, “Madam, I will.”

Happy, Olivia said, “You have said it! Now live it!”

Malvolio had been locked in a small, dark room in Olivia's house. In a room adjoining that room, Maria and Feste were talking. Maria was carrying a false beard and clerical clothing.

Maria said to Feste, "Please, put on this gown and this beard. I want to make Malvolio believe that you are Sir Topas, the curate. Put on these things quickly. I will go and get Sir Toby so that he can enjoy the fun."

Feste said, "Well, I will put these things on, and I will disguise myself in them. A disguise is a kind of dissembling, and I wish that I were the first person who ever dissembled in such a gown. Too many clerics have been corrupt."

He was in an odd position. A professional fool is a kind of servant and must keep the people around him happy. He needed to be loyal to Olivia, who was the most important person in the house, but he also needed to humor Sir Toby, who was a source of income. As for Malvolio, he had tried to get Olivia to fire Feste, and Feste would like to have revenge.

Feste put on the fake beard and the cleric's gown and said, "I am not distinguished enough to play the role well, nor lean enough to be thought a good student; still, to be said to be an honest man and a good host is almost as good as being said to be a dutiful man and a great scholar. I hear the co-conspirators coming."

Sir Toby and Maria entered the room.

Sir Toby said to Feste, "May Jove bless you, Master Parson."

"*Bonos dies*, Sir Toby," Feste said in deliberately bad Latin, thinking that a real parson ought to know Latin well.

Feste then began to mock philosophical language: "As the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc, 'That that is, is.' I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson. After all, what is 'that' but 'that' and what is 'is' but 'is'?"

"Malvolio is your prey," Sir Toby said. "Go after him."

Disguising his voice, Feste called, "Hello! May there be peace in this prison!"

Sir Toby said to Maria, "The knave counterfeits well; he is a good knave."

Hearing Feste's voice, Malvolio, locked but not bound in the dark room, yelled, "Who calls there?"

Feste said, "I am Sir Topas the curate, and I have come to visit Malvolio the lunatic."

"Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady, Olivia, and take her a message from me."

Feste pretended that Malvolio was possessed and that the Devil within Malvolio was speaking. Feste yelled, "Out, hyperbolic fiend! See how you are vexing this man! Fiend, can you talk about nothing but women?"

Sir Toby complimented Feste, "Well said, Master Parson."

Malvolio said, "Sir Topas, never was a man so much wronged as I am. Good Sir Topas, do not think that I am mad. They say that I am insane, and they have laid me here in hideous

darkness.”

“Satan, you are dishonest,” Feste said. “I call you dishonest instead of the stronger word ‘liar’ because I am one of those gentle ones who will treat the Devil himself with courtesy. Did you say that this place is dark?”

“As dark as Hell itself, Sir Topas,” Malvolio said.

“Why, it has bay windows that are as transparent as solid barricades, and the upper windows facing toward the south-north are as white and transparent as ebony wood, so why are you complaining of darkness?”

“Sir Topas, I am not mad. I say again to you: This place is dark.”

“Madman, you are wrong. I say that there is no darkness except for ignorance and you are more ignorant than were the Egyptians in the fog that caused three days of darkness.”

Malvolio replied, “I say that this place is as dark as ignorance, even though ignorance were as dark as Hell; and I say, there was never any man more abused than I am. I am no more mad than you are. Test me and see if I am mad. Ask me a question.”

Feste asked, “What is the opinion of the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?”

“He believed in reincarnation and that the soul of our grandmother might perhaps be in a bird.”

“What do you think of his theory?”

“I think nobly of the soul, and in no way approve of his theory.”

“Fare thee well,” Feste said. “Remain you always in darkness. You shall believe in the theory of Pythagoras before I will believe that you are sane, and you will be afraid to kill a really stupid woodcock, lest you dispossess the soul of your grandmother. Fare thee well.”

“Sir Topas! Sir Topas!” Malvolio called as Feste seemed to walk away.

Actually, Feste walked only a few steps away, just enough to be out of Malvolio’s hearing if Feste and others spoke quietly.

Sir Toby complimented Feste, “My most exquisite Sir Topas! You performed your role perfectly well!”

Feste said, “I can sail any sea. I can perform all roles.”

Maria said, “You could have performed the role without wearing the false beard and the parson’s gown. Malvolio cannot see you.”

The false beard and the gown had been Maria’s idea. Now she was mocking Feste for doing what she had told him to do.

Sir Toby said to Feste, “Talk to Malvolio in your own voice, and bring me word about what happens.”

He added, “I wish that this joke was over and that we were well rid of this knavery. If we could release Malvolio from this prison without too much trouble, I would do so. I am now in so

much trouble with Olivia, my niece, that I cannot much longer continue this joke, although I would like to.”

He said to Maria, “Come by and by to my chamber.”

Sir Toby and Maria departed, leaving Feste alone with Malvolio.

Feste had his orders, and he followed them.

In his own voice, he sang about a woman who first loved one man and then loved another:

*“Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,*

*“Tell me how your lady does.”*

Malvolio recognized Feste’s voice and called, “Fool!”

Feste sang, *“My lady is unkind, certainly.”*

Malvolio called, “Fool!”

*“Alas, why is she so?”*

“Fool, I say!”

*“She loves another.”*

Feste’s song was about the inconstancy of some loves. A person can love one person for a while, and then end up loving another person.

Feste stopped singing and asked, “Who is calling me?”

Malvolio said, “Good fool, if you would like to do something for me that will be well rewarded, get me some candles, and a pen, ink, and paper. As I am a gentleman, I will reward you for it.”

“Are you Master Malvolio?”

“Yes, good fool.”

“Sir, how did you fall out of your five wits: common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory?”

“Fool, never was a man so notoriously and obviously abused: I am as well in my wits, fool, as you are.”

“Only as well in your wits as I am?” Feste said. “Then you must be mad indeed, if you are no better in your wits than a fool.”

“They are treating me like a thing, not like a person,” Malvolio said. “They keep me in darkness, they send ministers to me, and they do everything they can to drive me out of my mind. They are asses!”

“Be careful what you say,” Feste said. “Sir Topas is here.”

Using the voice of Sir Topas, Feste said, “Malvolio, Malvolio, may Heaven restore your wits! Try to go to sleep, and stop talking your bibble babble.”

Malvolio called, "Sir Topas!"

Feste pretended to be Sir Topas, who he pretended was talking to Feste, "Don't talk to him, good fellow."

In his own voice, Feste said, "Who, I, sir? Not I, sir. God be with you, good Sir Topas."

In the voice of Sir Topas, Feste said, "Be well."

In his own voice, Feste said, "I will, sir, I will."

"Fool, fool, fool, I say!" Malvolio called, afraid that Feste was leaving.

"Sir, be quiet," Feste said. "What do you want to say, sir? Sir Topaz has just rebuked me for talking to you."

"Good fool, get me some candles and a pen, ink, and paper. I tell you that I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria."

"I wish that that were true, sir."

"I swear that I am sane," Malvolio said. "Good fool, get me a pen, ink, paper, and candles. Deliver to Olivia the letter that I will write. I will reward you more than you have ever been rewarded for the delivery of a letter."

"I will help you," Feste said. "I will get you what you need. But tell me the truth: Are you really mad? Or are you just pretending to be insane?"

"Believe me, I am not insane. I am telling you the truth."

"I don't believe you. I will never believe a madman until I see his brains. For one thing, I want to verify whether or not he has brains. Nevertheless, I will fetch you candles and a pen and paper and ink."

"I will pay you well," Malvolio said. "Please, go and get me what I need."

Feste left Malvolio. Throughout their encounter, Malvolio had been angry, but dignified and controlled.

Sir Toby and Maria were pretending that Malvolio was possessed by the Devil. If this were true, Malvolio would need an exorcism to cast the Devil out of his body. As he left Malvolio, Feste sang a song about old Vice, the son of the Devil, driving the Devil away with a wooden dagger:

*"I am gone, sir,*

*"And quickly, sir,*

*"I'll be with you again,*

*"In a trice,*

*"Like to the old Vice,*

*"In order to help you resist the Devil;*

*“Who, with dagger of lath,  
“In his rage and his wrath,  
“Cries, ‘Ah, ha!’ to the Devil:  
“Like a mad lad,  
“‘Pare your fingernails, Dad;  
“‘Adieu, good man Devil.’”*

— 4.3 —

Alone in Olivia’s garden, Sebastian marveled at his good fortune. He was a stranger in a strange land, but a sweet and beautiful lady who was a rich Countess had taken him in — and she appeared to have fallen in love with him at first sight. He wondered whether this were real.

He said to himself, “This is the air; that is the glorious Sun; this is the pearl she gave me — I feel it and I see it. I am enveloped in wonder, but I am not enveloped in madness.

“I wonder where Antonio is. I could not find him at the Elephant Inn, yet he had been there; and there I learned that he had left to walk the streets and find me. If he were here, he could give me golden advice. His counsel now might do me golden service. My mind agrees with my senses. Somehow there has been a mistake somewhere, but I am not mad. This unexpected and sudden flood of good luck exceeds all precedent and likelihood and so I am ready not to believe my own eyes and I am ready to distrust my reason when it tells me that I am not mad and that this lady is not mad. However, if this lady were insane, she could not run her house, command her servants, and handle her household affairs and make decisions with such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing as I see she does. Something here is deceptive, and I don’t know what it is. But here comes the lady now.”

Olivia and a priest walked up to Sebastian.

Olivia said to Sebastian, “Forgive me for my haste, but if your intentions toward me are consistent with marriage, go with me and this holy man now into the chapel. There, before the priest and underneath the chapel’s consecrated roof, marry me and promise to be true to me so that my most jealous and too doubtful soul may be at peace. The priest shall conceal our marriage until you are willing that it be made public. At that time, we will have a public wedding that is suitable for a Countess. What do you say? Are you willing to marry me?”

“I will follow this good man, and I will go with you. I will marry you, and I will always be true and faithful to you.”

Olivia said to the priest, “Lead the way, good father; and may the Sun shine and Heaven bless this marriage.”

## CHAPTER 5

— 5.1 —

In front of Olivia's house, Feste and Fabian were talking.

Fabian said to Feste, "Please let me see Malvolio's letter."

"Fabian, grant me a request first."

"Anything you want."

"Do not desire to see this letter."

"It's as if you gave me a dog and then as recompense asked for the dog back again."

Duke Orsino, Viola, Curio, and others arrived. Finally, Orsino was going to see Olivia face to face and do his own courting.

Orsino asked, "Are you servants of the Lady Olivia?"

Feste replied, "Yes, we decorate her household."

Recognizing Feste, Orsino said, "I know you well. How are you, my good fellow?"

"Sir, I am better off because of my enemies and worse off because of my friends."

"Don't you mean the contrary?" Orsino asked. "Aren't we better off because of our friends?"

"No, sir, we are worse off."

"How can that be?"

"Friends praise me and make an ass of me, but my enemies tell me plainly I am an ass. When I associate with my enemies, I profit by knowing myself better. When I associate with my friends, I am abused and made to do foolish things."

Feste thought, *This is true. Sir Toby and Maria, who are supposed to be friends of mine, made me do something bad to Malvolio, although I admit I did not resist. Cesario, however, is not supposed to be my friend because he serves Orsino, who bothers Olivia, whom I serve. But I profited by speaking to Cesario; we shared our jests and wisdom — and he tipped me well.*

Feste added, "If four negatives make two positives, I am worse off because of my friends and better off because of my enemies. Four negatives are a good thing. If I ask to kiss a woman, and she says, 'no, no,' the rules of grammar and of logic conclude that she is saying one yes. If I receive four noes, then logically I get two kisses. And when two quarreling lovers quarrel and then make up, they kiss. Their four lips that have been saying 'no' now become two mouths that kiss and say 'yes.'"

"This is excellent foolery," Orsino said.

"Indeed, it is not. You seem to be one of my friends."

"I do not want to be a friend who makes you worse off," Orsino said. "Here is gold for you."

He gave Feste a coin.

“Except that it would be double-dealing, sir, I wish that you would make it another,” Feste said.

“To be ‘double-dealing’ — duplicitous — would be bad counsel,” Orsino said. “And so would be, financially speaking, paying twice for something.”

“Realize that your grace is in your pocket, sir,” Feste said. “Feel free to go ahead and fish it out.”

“Well, I will be so much a sinner as to be a double-dealer,” Orsino said. He reached into his pocket, took out a coin, and gave it to Feste, saying, “Here is the second coin that I have dealt to you.”

Feste counted one through three in Latin, “*Primo, secundo, tertio*. These words make a good beginning. Third time lucky, and the third pays for all. In music, triple time is good to dance to, and the bells of Saint Benedict’s Church, sir, may put you in mind to be generous: They toll one, two, three.”

“You can fool no more money out of me in this particular game,” Orsino said, smiling, “but if you will let Olivia know that I am here to speak with her, and if you bring her to me, it may further awaken my generosity.”

“Sir, let your generosity sleep until I return again. I am going, sir, to get Olivia for you, but I would not have you think that my desire for coins is the sin of covetousness.”

Feste thought, *Getting a really good tip is an art. Getting any tip is a necessity.*

He added, “As you say, sir, let your generosity take a nap for now, but don’t worry, I will awaken it soon.”

Feste left.

Viola said to Orsino, “Here comes the man, sir, who rescued me when Sir Andrew wanted to duel me.”

Some officers of the law brought Antonio to Orsino.

Orsino said, “That face of his I do remember well, but when I saw it last, it was in the smoke of war besmeared as black as the face of Vulcan, the blacksmith god. He was the captain of a little boat with shallow draught and of little worth, but with that boat he grappled with and did such damage to the most noble ship of our fleet that we his enemies envied his bravery and despite our losses proclaimed his honor and gave him a great reputation for valor. Why is he here?”

The first officer said, “Orsino, this is that Antonio who captured the *Phoenix* and her freight from Candia, the capital of Crete. He also boarded the *Tiger*, in which encounter your young nephew Titus lost his leg. Here in our streets, he recklessly disregarded his notoriety in our country and the shame that comes from dueling in a private brawl, and so we arrested him.”

Viola said to Orsino, “He did me kindness, sir. He drew his sword so he could fight for me, but afterward, he spoke strange things to me. I don’t know the reason except that he must be mad.”

Orsino said to Antonio, "Notable pirate! You salt-water thief! What foolish boldness brought you here to us, whom you, with bloody and harmful actions that have been costly to us, have made your enemies? Why have you put yourself into our hands and made yourself subject to our mercy?"

"Orsino, noble sir, allow me to shake off these names you give me. I, Antonio, have never been a thief or a pirate, though I confess that I have been, for good reason, your enemy. A kind of witchcraft drew me to Illyria. That most ungrateful boy there by your side, from the rough sea's enraged and foamy mouth I did save."

He looked at Viola and then added, "He was close to death and seemed to be past hope. I saved his life and I gave him all my friendship without reservation. I dedicated myself to him. Because of my devoted friendship, in order to serve him I came here and exposed myself to the danger of this hostile town. I drew my sword to defend him when thugs beset him. After I was arrested, he did not want to face any danger and so his ungrateful cunning made him deny that he ever knew me. In the time that it takes to blink, he pretended to be a stranger who had not seen me for the last twenty years. In addition, he refused to give me my own money, which I had given him to hold and to use not half an hour previously."

"How could these things even be possible?" Viola said.

"When did this young man first come to my town?" Orsino asked.

"He came here today, sir," Antonio said. "During the three months previous to today, he and I have always been together, day and night, with not even a minute of separation between us."

Olivia and her attendants now walked toward Orsino and the others.

Orsino said, "Here comes the Countess. Heaven now walks on earth."

He said to Antonio, "As for you, your words are insane. For the past three months, this youth has been my servant. We will talk more about this later."

He said to the officers of the law, "Take Antonio to one side. I will now talk with Olivia."

Olivia said to Orsino, "How can I help you, sir? Don't ask for what I can't give you — my love — but otherwise I will gladly help you."

She said to Viola, whom she thought was Sebastian, whom she had married, "You should be here by my side."

Shocked, Viola said, "Madam!"

Orsino began speaking, "Gracious Olivia —"

But Olivia interrupted him and said to Viola, "What do you say, Cesario?"

Orsino wanted to speak to Olivia, but she said, "Not now," and then she looked at Viola.

Viola said, "My lord — Orsino — wants to speak to you; my duty is to be quiet while he speaks."

Olivia said to Orsino, "If you are here to sing the same old words to the same old tune, the experience will be as burdensome and distasteful to my ears as would be howling after I have

heard beautiful music.”

“Are you still so cruel, Olivia?”

“I am still so constant.”

“Constant to what?” Orsino said. “Perverseness? You are perverse in constantly refusing my love for you. You, lady, are cruel. My soul has made more sacrifices on your ungrateful and unpropitious altars than a lover has ever made before. What shall I do?”

“Do whatever you want, as long as it is suitable for you,” Olivia said.

“Why shouldn’t I, if I had the heart to do it, act like the Egyptian thief who, when he was close to death, decided to kill the woman he loved?” Orsino said. “That kind of savage jealousy can sometimes seem to be noble. But listen to me now. Since you reject my love, and since I know from your words at least in part why you keep rejecting my love, I am going to take away from you that young man who has taken the place in your heart that ought to be mine. Go ahead and keep your cold heart of marble. But this young man, this Cesario, I will keep away from you. You will never see him again. I care deeply for this young man, but I am angry because he has taken your love — love that ought to be mine.”

Orsino then said to Cesario, “Come with me now. If you were Olivia’s darling, you would benefit greatly, but I will keep you away from her to spite her. I will sacrifice a lamb — you, Cesario — to spite Olivia. She has a raven’s heart in her dove’s body.”

Viola revealed her feelings for Orsino: “I, most happily, readily, and willingly, to give you peace and satisfaction, a thousand deaths would die.”

“Where are you going, Cesario?” Olivia asked.

“After the man I love more than I love my eyes, more than I love my life, more by far than ever I shall love a wife. If I am lying, then let the gods punish me and take my life for being disloyal to my love.”

Olivia said, “I am detested. I have been lied to.”

Viola asked, “Who has lied to you? Who has done you wrong?”

“Have you forgotten who you are?” Olivia asked Viola. “Has it been so long?”

She ordered a servant, “Bring the priest to me.”

Orsino said to Viola, “Let’s go now.”

Viola began to move after Orsino, but Olivia said to her, “Where to, my lord? Cesario, my husband, stay here.”

“Husband!” Orsino said.

“Yes, husband. Can he deny that we are married?”

Orsino asked Viola, “Are you married to Olivia?”

“No, my lord, not I.”

Olivia said to Viola, “It is your base fear that makes you deny that you are married to me. Do not be afraid, Cesario. Reveal your good fortune. Acknowledge that you are my husband, as you know that you are, and then, because Orsino will know you are married to a Countess, you will have nothing to fear from him.”

The priest walked toward Olivia, who said to him, “Welcome, father! Please, reverend father, tell everybody — although we had wanted to keep secret what now we must reveal due to circumstances — what you know has recently happened between this young man and me.”

The priest said, “You two have made an eternal bond of love. This was confirmed by the mutual joining of your hands, attested by the holy kiss of your lips, and strengthened by the exchange of rings. I as priest and witness sealed all the ceremony of your eternal bond of love. My watch tells me that you two were married two hours ago.”

Orsino said to Viola, “You lying little cub of a fox! How evil will you be by the time you have a few grey hairs on your head? Or will you become so evil so quickly that it will trip you and destroy you even before you grow gray? Goodbye. Stay with your wife, but make sure that I never see you again.”

Viola replied, “My lord, I swear —”

Olivia interrupted and said, “Do not swear! Keep at least a little faith even though you are afraid of Orsino.”

Sir Andrew came running up to the group of people. His head was bleeding a little. He did not see Viola.

He shouted, “For the love of God, get me a doctor and send a doctor to Sir Toby!”

“What’s the matter?” Olivia asked.

“He has hit me on the head and has bloodied Sir Toby’s head, too! For the love of God, get me some help! I would give more than forty pounds to be safe in my home.”

“Who has done this, Sir Andrew?” Olivia asked.

“Orsino’s young gentleman. His name is Cesario. We took him for a coward, but he fights like the very Devil incarnate.”

Viola thought, *Sir Andrew means “incarnate” or “incarnadine” — blood-red — or both.*

“My gentleman?” Orsino asked. “Cesario?”

Sir Andrew noticed Viola and said, “My God! Here he is! You hit me on the head for nothing. Whatever I did, I did it because Sir Toby wanted me to do it.”

“Why are you saying that I hurt you?” Viola said, remembering her earlier “duel” with Sir Andrew. “I never hurt you. You drew your sword upon me without cause, but I spoke to you respectfully, and I did not hurt you.”

“If giving someone a bloody head is hurting him, then you have hurt me,” Sir Andrew said. “Do you think that a bloody head is nothing?”

Sir Toby came up to them, with Feste assisting him.

Sir Andrew said, "Here comes Sir Toby limping. You shall hear more about the fight. If he had not been drunk, he would have touched you with his sword."

Orsino asked, "What's wrong with you, Sir Toby?"

"Nothing important," Sir Toby answered. "A man has defeated me in a fight, and that is all there is to it."

He asked Feste, "Fool, have you seen Dick the doctor?"

"He is drunk, Sir Toby," Feste said. "He has been drunk for an hour. His eyes were closed because of drunkenness at eight in the morning."

"Then he's a rogue, and he is slow and reeling like someone dancing a passy measures panyn — a slow and stately dance that requires reeling like a drunk from side to side. I hate a drunken rogue."

Olivia said, "Take Sir Toby away and get him help. Who has made this havoc with them?"

Sir Andrew said, "I'll help you, Sir Toby. You and I can have our wounds taken care of together."

Sir Toby was angry because he had lost a fight and been wounded and he was especially angry because Olivia was angry at him. He took out his anger on Sir Andrew: "You will help me? You are an ass and a fool and a knave. You are a thin-faced knave and a sucker!"

Olivia said, "Put Sir Toby to bed, and find someone to take care of his wound."

Feste, Fabian, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew left.

Sebastian now came running up to Olivia. He did not notice Viola or Antonio.

He said to her, "I am sorry, Olivia, that I have hurt your uncle, but even if he had been my own brother, I would have been forced to hurt him for my own safety."

Olivia was looking strangely at him, for good reason.

He said to her, "You are looking strangely at me, and because of that I know that my action has offended you. Pardon me, sweet one, and remember the vows we made to each other so recently."

Orsino looked back and forth at Sebastian and Viola. He said, "One face, one voice, one style and color of clothing, and two persons. An optical illusion made by nature. It seems to be real, but it can't be!"

Sebastian noticed Antonio. He went to him and said, "My dear Antonio! The hours since I have been separated from you have racked and tortured me since I did not know where you were and whether you were safe."

"Are you Sebastian?" Antonio asked.

"Can you doubt that I am, Antonio?"

"How have you managed to divide and duplicate yourself? An apple, cut in two, is not more alike than you and this other person. Which of you two is Sebastian?"

Olivia said, "This makes me full of wonder."

Seeing Viola, Sebastian said, "Is that me standing there? I never had a brother, and I do not have the powers of a deity — I am not here and everywhere. I am not omnipresent. I had a sister, but she drowned in the remorseless waves and swells of the sea."

He said to Viola, "Be kind and tell me, how are you related to me? We so resemble each other that we must be related. Which town and country are you from? What is your name? Who were your parents?"

Viola replied, "I come from Messaline. Sebastian was my father's name. It was also my brother's name. He drowned and now has a watery tomb. If spirits can take on the appearance and the clothing of the deceased, you have come here to frighten us."

"I have a soul, indeed, but my soul is still clad with the body that I received while I was still in my mother's womb. If you were a woman instead of a man, since everything but that says that you are my sister, I would hug you and let my tears fall upon your cheek, and say to you, 'Welcome, drowned Viola! Welcome, and welcome again!'"

Viola said, "My father had a mole upon his brow."

"And so did my father."

Viola said, "My father died on the day when Viola turned thirteen years old."

"I remember well the day my father died. He did indeed die on the day that my sister turned thirteen years old."

Viola said, "If nothing else prevents our mutual happiness at finding each other except these deceptive male clothes that I have used to disguise myself, do not hug me until each circumstance of place, time, and fortune fit together and prove that I am Viola. To confirm that I am Viola, I will take you to a sea captain in this town. In his house, he has my female clothing. He helped save my life so that I survived to serve Duke Orsino. Ever since the shipwreck, I have served as a messenger between Orsino and Olivia."

Sebastian said to Olivia, "So this is how you mistook me for my sister, whom you did not know to be a woman. But nature corrected that mistake and turned it to your advantage. By loving my sister, you were loving someone like me. If the mistake had not been corrected, you would have married a maiden. Nevertheless, you were not deceived. You have married both a maiden and a man. I am a man, but I am also like a maiden — I am a virgin."

Olivia, of course, was shocked by the discovery that she had married someone whom she had just met.

Orsino said to her, "Don't worry. This young man — Sebastian — is of noble blood. You have not married a commoner."

He added, "If all these things are true, and they seem to be, since Sebastian and Cesario — as I call her — are mirror images of each other, then I also shall benefit from this most fortunate shipwreck."

He said to Viola, "Disguised as a young man, you have said to me a thousand times that you never would love a woman as much as you love me."

“All those sayings I will swear again,” Viola said. “They are as true as the fact that the Sun shines on the Earth and separates day from night.”

Orsino said to her, “Give me your hand.”

They held hands.

He said to her, “Let me see you dressed in your female clothing.”

Viola replied, “The captain who brought me safely to shore has my female clothing, but he is now in jail because of a complaint brought against him by Malvolio, who is a gentleman and a servant to Olivia.”

Olivia said, “Malvolio shall set the sea captain free.”

She ordered a servant, “Go and get him.”

Then she said, “But wait. I remember now that people say that he, poor gentleman, has become insane.”

Feste and Fabian now walked up to the group of people.

Olivia said, “My own distractions completely made me forget about him.”

She asked Feste, “How is Malvolio?”

“He is keeping off Beelzebub as well as a man in his condition may do. I have in my hand a letter that he wrote to you. I should have given it to you this morning, but the letters of a madman are not gospel truth and so it does not matter much when they are delivered.”

Olivia ordered, “Open the letter, and read it out loud.”

Feste said, “When a fool reads the words of a madman, there is much to be learned.”

He imitated the voice of a madman as he read, “*By the Lord, madam —*”

“What are you doing? Why are you reading the letter like that? Are you yourself mad?”

“No,” Feste answered, “but I am reading madness. If you want me to read the letter out loud as it ought to be read, you must allow me to read it in the voice of a madman. It must be a dramatic reading.”

She told him, “Read it as a man who has his right wits would read it.”

“I am doing that,” Feste said, “but the right wits of a madman are different from the right wits of a sane man. Therefore, perpend and be attentive, and listen.”

For once, Feste had misjudged his audience. Olivia respected Malvolio, and she was angry at Feste.

Olivia told Fabian, “You read the letter out loud.”

Feste gave Fabian the letter.

Using his normal voice, but louder, Fabian read, “*By the Lord, madam, you wrong me, and the world shall know it. Although you have put me into a dark room and given your drunken uncle*

*rule over me, yet I have the benefit of my senses as well as your ladyship has. I have your own letter that induced me to act as I did. This letter will justify my actions and show that you have behaved shamefully. Think about me as you please. As your steward, I should be more polite, but I am aggrieved. THE MADLY USED MALVOLIO.*

Even when he thought that he had a grievance against Olivia, Malvolio was conscious of his duty and aware when he was not living up to his own standards.

“Did he write this?” Olivia asked Feste.

“Yes, madam.”

Orsino said, “This letter does not sound as if it were written by a madman.”

Olivia ordered, “Fabian, release Malvolio from the dark room and bring him here.”

He left to go and get Malvolio.

Olivia said to Orsino, “My lord, I hope that after you think these things over that you will like to have me as a sister-in-law instead of as a wife. If you agree, on the same day two weddings will be held that will make us in-laws. We will have the weddings here at my house and at my expense.”

Orsino replied, “I am happy to accept your offer.”

He said to Viola, “I release you from having to do service to me. Because you have done me service for so long, which was unfeminine and beneath your soft and tender breeding, and since you have called me master for so long, here is my hand.”

Viola held it.

Orsino continued, “You shall be my wife.”

Olivia said, “And you shall be my sister-in-law!”

Fabian arrived, leading Malvolio.

Orsino asked, “Is this the supposed madman?”

“Yes, my lord,” Olivia replied. “This is he.”

She asked, “How are you, Malvolio? What has happened?”

He replied, “Madam, you have done me wrong — outrageous wrong.”

“Have I, Malvolio?” Olivia said. “No.”

“Lady, you have. Please, read this letter I have.”

He handed it to Olivia, who began reading it.

“You cannot possibly deny that this is your handwriting. Try to write differently from it, in handwriting or in choice of words. Try to say that this is not the seal with which you stamp your letters. Try to say that this is not your style. You cannot deny any of these things. Therefore, admit that you wrote that letter and explain honestly and sincerely to me why you wrote so clearly that I was in your favor, why you wrote that I should smile and put on cross-

gartered yellow stockings, why you wrote that I should frown upon Sir Toby and people lower in social status than I am, and why, after I obediently followed all your instructions and hoped for your love, you allowed me to be locked in a dark prison, visited by the priest, and made the most notorious fool and sucker who was ever tricked. Tell me why.”

“I am sorry, Malvolio,” Olivia said, “but this is not my handwriting, although I confess that it is much like my own. But unquestionably this is Maria’s handwriting. And now I remember that it was Maria who first told me that you were mad. Afterward, you came in smiling and you were dressed in such a way and you acted in such ways that this letter told you to do. Please, do not be so upset. This practical joke badly fooled you, but when we know the motivations and the perpetrators of this joke, you will be the plaintiff and the judge in your own case. You will pass judgment and give any sentences.”

Fabian, who did not want Olivia angry at him, said to her, “Good madam, hear me speak, and let no quarrel or brawl spoil the pleasure of this present hour and the planning of two marriages, which has amazed me. In hope that present pleasure shall not be ruined, very freely I confess that I and Toby set up this practical joke to make a fool of Malvolio because we have seen some arrogant and discourteous qualities in him. Maria wrote the letter at Sir Toby’s great insistence. Because of that, he has married her. How the practical joke played out with entertaining mischievousness should lead to laughter rather than revenge if we consider the injuries that both sides — Malvolio and us — have endured.”

Not only had Malvolio been made a fool, but now he had to listen to Fabian say that the practical joke was justified and something that should cause laughter.

Olivia said to Malvolio, “Poor fellow, how have they exposed you to ridicule!”

Feste said to Malvolio, “Why, ‘Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrown upon them.’ I was one, sir, in this interlude; I was one Sir Topas, sir; but that doesn’t matter. ‘By the Lord, fool, I am not mad.’ But do you remember what you said earlier? ‘I marvel that your ladyship takes delight in such an uninspired rascal. Unless you laugh and encourage him to make jokes, he is gagged and unable to say anything.’ The wheel of fortune turns and brings revenge.”

Malvolio said calmly and coldly to Fabian, “I’ll be revenged —”

Fabian’s face fell.

Malvolio turned and faced Feste and finished, “— on the whole pack of you.”

Feste’s face fell.

Angry but unbroken, Malvolio then bowed to Olivia and went inside her house.

Olivia had not been impressed by Fabian’s and Feste’s words. She said, “Malvolio has been most outrageously abused.” She made it clear that she was angry.

Orsino said to a couple of his servants, “Pursue him and entreat him to make peace.”

Olivia shook her head at Orsino. Malvolio needed to be alone for a while.

Orsino raised his hand in a Stop gesture, and the servants who had started to go after Malvolio stopped.

Olivia thought, *It is better to talk to Malvolio after he has recovered somewhat from his ordeal.*

Orsino said to Olivia, “Malvolio has not told us about the sea captain yet. When we have learned that part of the story and when the proper time has come, we shall hold our two weddings. In the meantime, sweet sister-in-law, we will stay here and talk.”

He added, “Cesario, come; for so I shall call you while you are dressed as a man. When you dress in female clothing and are seen, then you will be my wife and my Queen.”

Everyone went into Olivia’s house except for Feste, who was once again in trouble with Olivia and who sang this song:

*“When that I was only a little tiny boy,  
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
“A foolish thing was but a toy,  
“For the rain it raineth every day.  
“But when I came to man’s estate,  
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
“’Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,  
“For the rain it raineth every day.  
“But when I came — alas! — to take a wife,  
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
“By swaggering could I never thrive,  
“For the rain it raineth every day.  
“But when I came unto my beds,  
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
“With toss-pots [sots] still had drunken heads,  
“For the rain it raineth every day.  
“A great while ago the world was begun,  
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
“But that’s all one, our story is done,  
“And we’ll strive to please you every day.”*

And such is life for many fools. We are born, become children, and have mischievous deeds dismissed as trifles, and then we reach maturity and go from underachievement to underachievement. Possible opportunities disappear and both important and “important” people often shut their gates against us because they think that we are knaves or thieves, and we often grow to regret either having a spouse or not having a spouse. After boasting to

ourselves about the great things we will do, we often find ourselves not able to do them. We grow older, we find that life grows tougher, we have thoughts that keep us awake at night, and the preferred entertainment of many people, perhaps including ourselves, is getting drunk. Our stories are just some more such stories of very many such stories in the history of the world. As with fools, so with Malvolio — and you and me.

## ***Appendix A: Who is the Proudest and Most Evil Character in Twelfth Night?***

Note: This brief essay includes but enlarges on some material found above in my retelling of the play.

When Maria writes a letter to fool Malvolio into making an ass of himself, she includes the letters M, O, A, I. Malvolio realizes that this is a puzzle, and he tries to solve the puzzle. He believes that the letters refer to himself because all of the letters are in his name.

Malvolio did not correctly solve the puzzle of M, O, A, I. True enough. But what is the correct solution to the puzzle? What if M, O, A, and I are — in part — an anagram? We certainly have seen Malvolio and the people spying on him when he finds the letter in Olivia's garden talk about rearranging the letters. Malvolio tells us that A should go after M, and Fabian mentions O and end. What do we get when we rearrange the letters and put I at the beginning? I M A O. I am A and O. The O goes at the end, and the end is Omega. If the end is Omega, what is the beginning? The beginning is Alpha. Therefore, I am Alpha and Omega. This is Revelation 22:13 (King James Bible): "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*" These are words — and letters — that apply to God, but Malvolio is applying them to himself. Revelation is the last book of the Bible. What is the first book of the Bible? Genesis. What is the most important part of Genesis? The Fall. The serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: "*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*" (Genesis 3:5, King James Bible). Eve — and Adam — ate the fruit, committing the sin of pride. They placed themselves before God and disobeyed the command of God. The sin of pride is regarding oneself as the center of the universe, as being more important than anything or anybody else. Pride is a deadly sin, and it is the foundation of the other deadly sins:

### 1) Pride.

I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.

### 2) Envy.

I am the center of the universe, so I ought to have it all, and if you have something I want, I envy you.

### 3) Wrath.

Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.

### 4) Sloth.

I am the center of the universe, so I don't have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.

#### 5) Avariciousness and Prodigality.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every dime I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.

#### 6) Gluttony.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these two extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward to myself for being so fabulous.

#### 7) Lust.

I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it's OK if I lie to get someone in bed and never call in the days and weeks afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.

Malvolio's name is Mal Volio — "I wish badly." Proud people wish badly.

The rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden led to the first sin committed by human beings. Previously, an angel had committed the first sin by supernatural beings.

That proud supernatural being is Lucifer, who put himself before God and rebelled against him. Because of this sin, Lucifer is condemned to spend eternity shackled in the darkness of Hell. Adam and Eve committed the original sin of human beings. Lucifer committed the original sin of supernatural beings.

If Malvolio were a better person, he would solve the puzzle of I M A O correctly and he would realize that he is guilty of the sin of pride. He wants to marry Olivia, but he wants to marry her because doing so will improve his position in society. He does not want to marry Olivia because he can make her happy. He loves Olivia's social standing and her wealth.

Malvolio regards himself as being more important than Olivia: I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia because doing so will make ME happy. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia for her social standing and money. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia although I do not love her.

If Malvolio were a more intelligent person, he would realize that he on the verge of a fall just like Adam and Eve were when the serpent tempted them in the Garden of Eden or like Lucifer when he rebelled against God.

Malvolio is not morally good enough or intelligent enough to correctly solve Maria's puzzle, and he believes the letter that Maria wrote and he will be punished for believing it just like Lucifer was punished. However, the people judging him and punishing him are not God.

There are important differences in Malvolio's sin and the sin of Adam and Eve and of Lucifer:

1) Adam and Eve actually ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and Lucifer actually led a rebellion of some angels against God. Malvolio wants to marry Olivia although

he does not love her — he does respect her — because it will improve his social status. However, he does not actually marry Olivia. Motive is important in judging, but so are consequences.

2) God judges Adam and Eve and Lucifer. Who judges Malvolio? Mainly Maria and Sir Toby. We do have evidence that Malvolio is proud from Olivia, who tries to make peace between Malvolio and Feste after Malvolio criticizes Feste after he returns from a long absence. She tells Malvolio that he is “sick of [from] self-love.” But Olivia is not judging Malvolio in order to punish him. She is trying to make peace between Malvolio and Feste.

3) God judges sinners, and God punishes them. God gives people free will, and he judges them after they die and then either rewards or punishes them. If a sinful human being repents before dying, even with his or her last breath, that person will be rewarded with Paradise. Maria and Sir Toby judge Malvolio and punish him by treating him as if he were insane.

Maria writes M, O, A, I in her letter, but to whom do those letters most apply? Malvolio, or Maria? They apply to Maria more than they apply to Malvolio.

Maria thinks this: I am the center of the universe, and therefore I can judge and sentence Malvolio however I see fit. I am greater than God because I am able to judge Malvolio now instead of giving him a chance to repent before his death.

As I see it, Maria and Sir Toby are the most evil characters in the play. What punishment do they sentence Malvolio to undergo? They sentence Malvolio to be bound and placed in a room that is as dark as Hell. (In actual performance, the binding (at least of hands) apparently does not take place, as we know because Malvolio is able to write a letter to Olivia. Also, it allows actors more freedom of movement.) How is Lucifer punished? He is bound and placed in Hell, which is in eternal darkness. Only God can justly judge a person and justly give such a punishment.

Maria is the person most responsible for judging Malvolio. Sir Toby participates in the fooling of Malvolio, but he lacks a good brain. Maria is more intelligent than Sir Toby, who is more intelligent than Sir Andrew, who allows himself to be manipulated by Sir Toby. Fabian and Feste play roles in the fooling of Malvolio, but they at least admit to Olivia the roles that they played. Their ‘confessions’ are problematic, however, as Fabian wants to avoid getting in trouble with Olivia and Feste states that one reason for him to be involved in the practical joke is revenge for the time that Malvolio criticized him in front of Olivia.

What is Malvolio’s real sin?

Malvolio’s sin is wanting to marry Olivia although his reason is to advance his social standing — we have no indication that Malvolio feels romantic love for her. (Malvolio also thanks Jove, not God, for what he thinks is his good fortune. Wanting to marry someone simply in order to improve one’s social standing is unChristian.)

Some of Malvolio’s “sins” are not sins. Sir Toby is angry at Malvolio for wanting to stop the late-night party, but Malvolio works for Olivia and his job as steward is to help run the household and to carry out her orders, which include trying to keep Sir Toby from partying — his partying keeps her from sleeping. Sir Toby shows pride because he thinks that a mere servant such as Malvolio ought not to tell him — a knight! — not to party so much.

Malvolio also lacks diplomacy. He criticizes Feste in front of Olivia. If he were more intelligent, he would realize that Olivia enjoys Feste's foolery and therefore Feste is providing good value for his room and board and whatever stipend he may get.

Malvolio appears to be a very competent steward and may be a bit of a workaholic. He walks in Olivia's garden, which ought to be a source of pleasure and entertainment, but he does such things as practice his courtly gestures, something that would make him a better steward.

Many of Malvolio's faults are not sins. We think that Feste is a fine fool and that Malvolio is missing out by not appreciating his foolery. We think that there is a time for work and a time for play, but Malvolio appears not to take much time to play — the most fun he has in the play is imagining what he would do if he and Olivia were married. One thing that he would do is to rebuke Sir Toby — if anyone ever needed to be rebuked, that person is Sir Toby.

When it comes to fun, everyone needs to have some fun, but the amount that is appropriate varies with age. Young children should spend most of their free time playing. College students should spend a lot of time studying but still have time for fun. Older people such as Malvolio — and Sir Toby — definitely should have fun, but they should also be productive. For workers such as Malvolio, chances are that they have little time for fun. Sir Toby basically sponges off his niece and suckers such as Sir Andrew; he contributes little to anyone. Feste's job is providing fun for others, and that is a difficult job indeed.

Can a person judge whether another person is really having fun? You may attend a play that you enjoy. You notice a critic who is not laughing with the audience, but who is watching the play intently. You think that the play will receive a mediocre review at best, but the next day you read the critic's review and find out that he or she was having the time of his or her life. (My idea of a good time is sitting on the couch and reading a good book — Sir Toby would probably walk in on me and ask, "Where are the cakes and ale?")

One fault that Malvolio has is an inability to appreciate satire. That is one reason he criticizes Feste. If an inability to appreciate good and real satire — some so-called "satire" is not satire — were a sin, however, many people we consider to be good would go to Hell.

Malvolio does show one sin — understandably — at the end of the play: anger. He vows to get revenge "on the whole pack of you." We are not told to whom he says it, but my guess is to Fabian and Feste, who have confessed their part in the cruel practical joke but who have not expressed remorse for what they did — remorse is an important part of religious confession. Malvolio's anger is a direct result of the cruel practical joke and its aftermath. By thinking up and performing the practical joke, Maria has given Malvolio an opportunity to sin. We are horrified that Lady Macbeth leads her husband to sin. Maria's sin is not as bad as that of Lady Macbeth's because a steward, even if he were to turn evil, cannot cause as much damage as a Thane or a King.

Malvolio has sinned in his desire to marry Olivia simply in order to improve his social standing — we have no evidence that he loves Olivia. He does not repent that sin. We can note that Lucifer also does not repent his sin. None of the sinners in Dante's *Inferno* repent. But Malvolio is not yet dead, and he has time to repent.

Anyone who sees *Twelfth Night* thinks that Malvolio is treated way too harshly for whatever faults he has. Shakespeare understood human nature, and he had to have known that this is the way that we would feel. Therefore, this is the feeling that he wanted us to have: He wanted us

to sympathize with Malvolio. Usually, Malvolio is seen as the bad guy in the play, but I think that, despite Malvolio's faults, Sir Toby and Maria are much more evil than Malvolio, with Maria being the most evil — and the proudest — of all.

Perhaps actors are not playing Malvolio correctly if they cry and scream when Malvolio is locked in the dark room. Perhaps he maintains his dignity while he is in the dark room. If he did, that would prevent the cringing that the audience feels when the actor playing Malvolio cries and suffers. Audiences, in my opinion, should feel sympathy for Malvolio when he is imprisoned, but they should not cringe. (When the actor playing Malvolio cries and screams, I feel that the actor is saying, "Hey, everybody! Look at me! I'm acting!") And although Malvolio is angry, perhaps when he says at the end of the play that he will be revenged on "the whole pack of you," perhaps he says that only to Feste and Fabian — the other members of the pack are Sir Toby and Maria, who are not present. Perhaps he says this calmly and coldly and not furiously. His anger may be a controlled anger. What happens to Malvolio after the end of the play? We don't know, but one possibility is that he goes to his room in Olivia's house, freshens up, and then tries to decide on the proper punishments for those who mistreated him. Olivia told him that he would be prosecutor and judge. No doubt he found them guilty and as judge he must decide on the proper punishments: ones that are severe enough to satisfy him but not so severe that Olivia changes her mind about letting him be judge.

By the way, in Dante's *Inferno*, we find out what is at the center of the universe. Dante believed that the Earth was at the center of the universe. The Inferno, aka Hell, goes all the way down to the center of the Earth, which is where Lucifer is imprisoned. Dante and his guide, Virgil, need to travel up to the Earth's surface on the other side of the entrance of Hell so that they can reach the Island of Purgatory, so they climb down Lucifer's body to reach a passageway leading to Purgatory. At Lucifer's midpoint, they turn around and reverse direction because they have reached the center of the Earth and are no longer going down but are heading up again. What is the exact center of the universe? It is located in Lucifer's rectum.

One final point: All of sin is based on pride, and all of us have sinned. All of us have at one time or another considered ourselves to be the center of the universe.

### **Recommended Reading**

Inge Leimberg, "'M.O.A.I.' Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)." *Connotations* 1.1 (1991): 78-95.

## **CHAPTER XII: The Two Gentlemen of Verona**

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)**

Duke of Milan, *father to Silvia.*

Valentine, Proteus, *the two gentlemen of Verona.*

Antonio, *father to Proteus.*

Thurio, *a foolish rival to Valentine.*

Eglamour, *agent for Silvia in her escape.*

Host, *at whose establishment Julia lodges in Milan.*

Outlaws, *with Valentine.*

Speed, *a quick-witted young page to Valentine.*

### ***Launce, a servant to Proteus.* CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Duke of Milan, *father to Silvia.*

Valentine, Proteus, *the two gentlemen of Verona.*

Antonio, *father to Proteus.*

Thurio, *a foolish rival to Valentine.*

Eglamour, *agent for Silvia in her escape.*

Host, *at whose establishment Julia lodges in Milan.*

Outlaws, *with Valentine.*

Speed, *a quick-witted young page to Valentine.*

Launce, *a servant to Proteus.*

Panthino, *a servant to Antonio.*

Julia, *who loves Proteus.*

Silvia, *who loves Valentine.*

Lucetta, *a waiting-woman to Julia.*

Servants, Musicians.

Crab, *dog to Launce.*

Scene: Verona; Milan; and a forest.

The name VALENTINE is associated with true love.

PROTEUS was a sea-god who was a shape-shifter. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus captures PROTEUS and holds on to him although he changes into many shapes. PROTEUS then gives Odysseus the information he asks for. PROTEUS is a name that is associated with fickleness in love.

## CHAPTER 1

### — 1.1 —

In Verona, Valentine and Proteus were talking together. They were friends, but they would be separated because Valentine was leaving Verona to travel to Milan. Proteus was staying in Verona because he had fallen in love with Julia and wanted to be with her.

“Stop trying to persuade me to stay in Verona, my lovesick friend Proteus,” Valentine said. “Home-staying youth always have homely — simple and dull — wits. If it were not the case that your affectionate love chains your tender and youthful days to the sweet glances of your honored love, I would rather have your company as I see the wonders of the world abroad than for you to live dully and like a sluggard at home and wear out your youth with aimless idleness. But since you are in love, love continually and thrive therein, just like I will when I begin to love.”

“Will you be gone? Do you still intend to travel?” Proteus asked. “Sweet Valentine, *adieu!* Think about your Proteus, when you happen to see some rare and noteworthy object during your travel. Wish that I could partake in your happiness when you meet with good fortune, and when you are in danger, if ever danger comes to you, commend your grievance to my holy prayers, for I will be your beadsman, Valentine. Like a beadsman, I will pray for you.”

A beadsman is paid to pray for another person. The beadsman prays on a Bible.

“Will you pray on a love-book for my success?” Valentine asked. “Will you pray on a book of love stories?”

“Upon some book I love, I will pray for you.”

“Some book you love? That will be a book that tells some shallow story of deep love — for example, how young Leander crossed the Hellespont.”

Leander was a young man who loved a woman named Hero. He was accustomed to swim across the Hellespont each night so that he could be with her.

“That’s a deep story of a deeper love,” Proteus said. “For he was more than over shoes in love.”

Yes, Leander was deeply immersed in love — he was over his shoes in love. He was also deeply immersed in water. One night when he was swimming in the Hellespont to visit Hero, he drowned.

“Yes, that is true, and what I said about you and love is true,” Valentine said. “You yourself are over boots in love, and yet you have never swum the Hellespont.”

“Over the boots? No, do not give me the boots.”

Proteus was referring to a game played in Warwickshire; the loser had his buttocks slapped with a pair of boots. The expression “Don’t give me the boots” came to mean “Don’t make me a laughingstock.”

“No, I will not give you the boots,” Valentine said, “for it will not boot — profit — you.”

“What do you mean by ‘it’?”

“By ‘it,’ I mean your being in love. When you are in love, your groans buy you scorn. When you are in love, heart-sore sighs buy you disdainful looks. When you are in love, twenty wakeful, weary, tedious nights buy you one fading moment’s mirth. If with luck you win your love, perhaps what you win will be unlucky. If you fail to win your love, then you have won only a grievous labor — sorrow and work. Whatever the outcome, this is all you get: Intelligence buys foolishness, or else foolishness vanquishes intelligence.”

“So, by your speech and based on circumstantial evidence, I guess that you are calling me a fool,” Proteus said.

“So, because of your circumstances and your situation, I fear you’ll prove to be a fool,” Valentine said.

“It is Love you have an argument with,” Proteus said. “I am not Love.”

Love is the winged and blindfolded god Cupid, son of Venus.

“Love is your master, for he masters you,” Valentine replied. “And a man who is in that way yoked by a fool, I think, should not be recorded in the history books as a wise man.”

“Yet writers say, just like the eating caterpillar dwells in the sweetest bud, so eating love dwells in the finest wits of all,” Proteus said.

“And writers say, just like the most promising bud is eaten by the caterpillar before the bud blooms, the young and tender wit is turned to foolishness by love. The young and tender wit is withered in the bud and loses its freshness and vitality even in the springtime. It also loses all the fair effects of future hopes.

“But why am I wasting time to give advice to you, who are a worshipper of foolish desire?”

“Once more *adieu!* My father is at the harbor waiting for me. He wants to see me set out on my voyage.”

“And thither I will accompany you, Valentine.”

“Sweet Proteus, no; let us now take our leave of each other. Send letters to me in Milan and let me hear from you about your fortunes — good or bad — in love, and tell me what other news happens here while I, your friend, am absent. Likewise, I will send letters to you here in Verona.”

“May all happiness happen to you in Milan!” Proteus said.

“And may you experience all happiness here at home!” Valentine said. “And so, farewell.”

They hugged, and then Valentine set off to walk to the harbor.

Alone, Proteus said, “He hunts honor, and I hunt love. He leaves his friends to dignify and honor them more by acquiring a better reputation for himself in the world, while I leave myself, my friends and all else, for love.

“You, Julia, have metamorphosed me. You have made me neglect my studies, waste my time, war against good advice, and value the world at nothing. You have made my intelligence weak

because I keep musing about you, and you have made my heart sick because I keep thinking about you.”

Speed, who was Valentine’s quick-witted servant, walked over to Proteus, for whom he had delivered a letter and from whom he hoped to receive a large tip — certainly more than sixpence.

“Sir Proteus, may God save you!” Speed said. “Have you seen my master, Valentine?”

“Just now he departed from here to get on board ship and travel to Milan.”

“Twenty to one then the ship has sailed already, and I have played the sheep in losing him.”

“Indeed, a sheep very often strays, if the shepherd is away for a while.”

“You conclude that my master is a shepherd, then, and I am a sheep?” Speed asked.

“I do.”

“Why then, my horns are his horns, whether I wake or sleep.”

Sheep have horns, and cuckolds — men with unfaithful wives — are said to have horns. Since neither Valentine nor Speed was married, Speed was saying that he and Valentine would in the future have horns.

Speed was also alluding to a nursery rhyme:

*Little Boy Blue,  
Come blow your horn,  
The sheep’s in the meadow,  
The cow’s in the corn;  
But where is the boy  
Who looks after the sheep?  
He’s under a haystack,  
He’s fast asleep.  
Will you wake him?  
Oh no, not I,  
For if I do  
He will surely cry.*

Proteus said, “That is a silly answer and well suited to a sheep.”

“This proves then that I am still a sheep?”

“That is true, and it proves that your master is a shepherd.”

“No,” Speed said. “I can make an argument that this is not true.”

“Things shall go poorly for me unless I can prove that the statement is true by another argument,” Proteus said.

“The shepherd seeks the sheep, and the sheep does not seek the shepherd,” Speed said, “but I seek my master, and my master does not seek me; therefore, I am no sheep.”

“The sheep follows the shepherd in order to get fodder,” Proteus counter-argued. The shepherd does not follow the sheep in order to get food. You follow your master in order to get wages; your master does not follow you in order to get wages; and therefore you are a sheep.”

“Such another proof will make me cry ‘baa,’” Speed said. “Or should I cry ‘bah’?”

“Listen,” Proteus said. “Did you give my letter to Julia?”

“Yes sir,” Speed said. “I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her, who is a laced mutton, and she, a laced mutton, gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labor.”

A mutton is a woman — often a prostitute. A laced mutton is a woman wearing fancy clothing.

“Here’s too small a pasture for such a store of muttons,” Proteus said.

“If the ground is overcharged — overfull — with mutton, you had best stick her.”

To stick a mutton could mean to kill a sheep by stabbing it with a knife, or it could mean to have sex with a mutton — a woman.

“No, when you say that, you go astray, and it would be best for me to pound you,” Proteus said.

He thought, *Because of what you just said, I should give you a beating — I should use my fists to pound you.*

Speed had run an errand for Proteus, and he wanted a good tip for running the errand. He preferred to get the tip quickly — before answering a lot of questions. The information he had to give to Proteus was not what Proteus wanted to hear and would result in either a small tip or no tip.

“A pound?” Speed said. “No, a pound is too much money to pay me for running this errand. Less than a pound shall be a good tip for me for carrying your letter.”

Speed wanted a good tip, but he knew better than to be greedy. He knew that there was no way he would receive a pound as a tip from Proteus.

“You mistake my meaning,” Proteus said, setting up another pun. “I mean that I should impound you — I should put you in a pinfold, an enclosure — a pound — for stray animals.”

“You have gone from a pound, which is a good tip, to a pin, which is a worthless tip,” Speed said. “Fold it over and over, and it is threefold too little for carrying a letter to your lover.”

Again, Speed was punning. A pound is a unit of money and it is an enclosure, and a fold is an action (as in folding a piece of paper and as in shutting up sheep, etc. in a fold, aka a pen) and it is an enclosure. If Proteus were to impound Speed’s tip over and over, it would be too small to reward Speed for running the errand.

“What did she say to you when you delivered my letter to her?” Proteus asked.

Speed nodded.

Proteus gave Speed a questioning look, and Speed said, “Ay.”

“Nod, followed by ‘ay’ — why, that’s ‘noddy,’” Proteus said. “A noddy is a fool.”

“You mistook my meaning, sir,” Speed said. “I indicated that she nodded, and you asked me if she nodded, and I said, ‘Ay.’”

“And set together they make nod-ay, aka noddy.”

“Now that you have taken the pains to set it together, take the word for your pains,” Speed said. “You are a noddy.”

“No, no; you shall have the word ‘noddy’ as payment for your pains in bearing the letter,” Proteus said.

“Well, I see that I must be obliged to bear with you,” Speed said.

One meaning of “to bear with” is “to put up with.”

“Why, sir, how do you bear with me?”

“I really did bear the letter very orderly; I have followed your orders, and yet I have nothing but the word ‘noddy’ for my pains.”

“Curse me, but you have a quick wit,” Proteus said.

“And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse.”

“Come, come, open up and tell me what I want to know quickly. What did she say?”

“Open your purse so that the money and the information you want may be both at once quickly delivered.”

Proteus gave Speed a sixpence — a smaller tip than Speed was hoping for — and said, “Well, sir, this is for your pains. What did she say?”

“Truly, sir, I think you’ll hardly win her.”

“Why, could you perceive so much from her?”

“Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter,” Speed said.

Actually, he could not perceive anything at all from Julia because he had not seen her; he had given the letter to Lucetta, Julia’s waiting-woman. Because Speed was annoyed with Proteus, he was making things up.

“All I was looking for from her was a tip, and I could not perceive one. Because she was so hard to me who brought her your letter, which revealed what is on your mind, I fear she’ll prove to be as hard to you when you talk to her in person. Give her no gift but stones because she’s as hard as steel.”

Stones can be precious jewels — or family jewels.

“What did she say?” Proteus asked. “Nothing?”

“No, not so much as ‘Take this for your pains,’” Speed said. “I can testify about how you tip. I thank you because you have given me a testern, a sixpence, and therefore you have testerned me. In response to such a tip, I shall let you hereafter carry your own letters and deliver them yourself. And so, sir, I’ll leave now and give my master your greetings.”

Proteus had tested Speed — tried his patience — with the small tip of a testern, and in doing so Proteus had turned him away. Speed was unwilling to do errands for Proteus since the tips Proteus gave were so small, in Speed’s opinion.

“Go, go, be gone, and save your ship from shipwreck,” Proteus said. “The ship cannot wreck and perish with you onboard because you are destined to die a drier death on shore. You are destined to hang and so you shall never be drowned.”

Speed exited.

Alone, Proteus said to himself, “I must use a better messenger than Speed. I fear my Julia will not willingly accept my letters when they are delivered by such a worthless postman.”

— 1.2 —

In the garden of Julia’s home in Verona, Julia and her waiting-woman, Lucetta, were talking. The name “Lucetta” is a diminutive of “Lucy.”

Julia said, “Lucetta, now we are alone, tell me whether you would advise me to fall in love.”

“Yes, I would advise you to fall in love, madam, as long as you do not heedlessly stumble.”

The stumble could be a sexual indiscretion.

“Of all the fair company of gentlemen who every day encounter me and parley — talk to — me, in your opinion which is the worthiest man to love?”

“If it will please you to repeat their names, I’ll tell you what I think about them according to my shallow, simple skill,” Lucetta replied.

“What do you think of the handsome Sir Eglamour?”

“I think of him as a knight well-spoken, neat and fine and something of a dandy; however, if I were you, he never should be mine.”

“What do you think of the rich Mercatio?”

“I think well of his wealth, but he himself is so-so.”

“What do you think of the well-born Proteus?”

“Lord, Lord!” Lucetta said. “See what folly reigns in us!”

“What!” Julia said. “What is the meaning of your strong emotion when you hear his name?”

“I beg your pardon, dear madam. It is a surpassing shame that I, unworthy as I am, should pass judgment like this on loving and amorous gentlemen.”

“Why not pass judgment on Proteus, as you have on all the rest?”

“Then this is my opinion,” Lucetta said. “Of many good gentlemen, I think him best.”

“Why do you think so? What is your reason?”

“I have no other reason, but only a woman’s reason; I think him so because I think him so,” Lucetta said. “‘Because’ is a woman’s reason.”

“And would you have me cast my love on him?”

“Yes, if you thought your love not cast away.”

“Why, he, of all the rest, has never told me he loves me,” Julia said.

“Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves you,” Lucetta said.

“His lack of speaking to me shows that his love for me is only small.”

“Fire that’s most closely confined burns most of all.”

“They do not love who do not show their love.”

“To the contrary, they love least who let other men know their love.”

“I wish I knew what Proteus was thinking,” Julia said.

Lucetta handed her a letter and said, “Read this letter, madam.”

Julia read out loud, “*To Julia,*” and then she said, “Tell me, from whom did this letter come?”

“The contents will show that,” Lucetta replied.

“Tell me, who gave it to you?”

“Speed, Valentine’s page, gave it to me, and the letter was written, I think, by Proteus. Speed would have given the letter to you; but I, running into him, took it and said that I would give it to you. Pardon me for doing so, please.”

“Now, by my modesty, you are a good go-between! Do you dare to presume to harbor wanton and lascivious lines of writing? Do you dare to whisper and conspire against my youth? Now, trust me, a go-between is a position of great worth and you are an officer fit for the position. There, take the letter and see that it is returned. If you do not, then leave and return no more into my sight.”

“To plead for love deserves more recompense than to plead for hate deserves,” Lucetta said, accepting the letter that Julia handed to her.

“Will you leave?”

“Yes, I will, so that you can think things over.”

Carrying the letter, Lucetta exited.

Alone, Julia said to herself, “And yet I wish I had looked at and read the letter. It would be a shame to call Lucetta back again and ask her to do something — hand me the letter — for which I scolded her.”

“What a fool she is! She knows that I am a young, unmarried woman and so she should have forced me to read the letter from a male admirer. And yet she did not. Doesn’t she realize that unmarried women, in modesty, say ‘no’ to reading a love letter — and yet they want the deliverer of the love letter to interpret that ‘no’ as meaning ‘yes’?”

“How wayward is this foolish love that, like an irritable baby, will scratch the nurse and soon all humbled will kiss the rod and accept its punishment!

“How churlishly I scolded Lucetta away from here, when actually I want her to be here! I have taught my brow to frown angrily when inward joy makes my heart smile!

“My penance is to call Lucetta back and ask forgiveness for my past folly.”

She called, “Lucetta! Come here!”

Carrying the letter, Lucetta returned and asked, “What does your ladyship want?”

“Is it almost dinnertime?” Julia asked.

“I wish it were, so that you might kill your stomach on your meat and not upon your maid.”

In this society, the stomach was regarded as the site both of hunger and of anger. Lucetta wanted Julia to kill her stomach on food — that would kill her hunger. This would be preferable to killing her stomach on her maid — relieving her anger by directing it at Lucetta.

Lucetta dropped the letter on purpose so that Julia would notice it. Lucetta then picked up the letter.

“What is it that you picked up so gingerly?” Julia asked.

“Nothing.”

“Why did you stoop, then?”

“To pick a letter up that I let fall.”

“And is that letter nothing?”

“Nothing concerning me,” Lucetta said.

“Then let it lie for those whom it concerns,” Julia said.

Deliberately mistaking the word “lie” (“remain”) to mean “tell a falsehood,” Lucetta replied, “Madam, it will not lie where it concerns unless it has a false interpreter.”

She meant that the words in the love letter were true — Proteus did love Julia.

“Some love of yours has written to you in rhyme,” Julia said, pretending that the letter was a love letter to Lucetta.

Lucetta and Julia then began to make puns on musical terms.

“So that I can sing it to a tune, madam, give me a note,” Lucetta said. “Your ladyship can set.”

The word “note” could mean “a short document” as well as a note of music, and the word “set” could mean “set down in writing” as well as “set to music.”

Julia replied, “Set as little store by such toys as may be possible. Best sing it to the tune of ‘Light of Love.’”

Lightness in love could mean promiscuity.

“It is too heavy — too serious and important — for so light — so trivial — a tune.”

“Heavy! It likely has some burden then?”

The word “burden” meant “a load” as well as “an undersong or bass.” During lovemaking in the missionary position, the woman bears the burden of the man’s weight.

“Yes,” Lucetta said, “and it would be melodious if you would sing it.”

“Why don’t you sing it?”

“I cannot reach so high,” Lucetta said.

She meant that she could not reach the high notes, and she meant that Proteus’ social position was so high that he was out of her league.

“Let’s see your song,” Julia said, reaching for the letter.

Lucetta would not hand over the letter.

Angry, Julia said, “What do you think you are doing, minx!”

“Keep tune there still, so you will sing it out,” Lucetta replied. “And yet I think I do not like this tune.”

If Julia were to sing, she would have to keep in tune, and yet her emotions were out of tune. Julia was angry at Lucetta, who was angry at Julia.

“You do not like this tune?”

“No, madam, it is too sharp,” Lucetta said.

Julia’s anger was making her be sharp with Lucetta.

“You, minx, are too saucy,” Julia said. “You are impudent.”

“No, now you are too flat,” Lucetta replied.

The word “flat” meant “below normal pitch” as well as “outspoken.” Julia was speaking “flat out” — without holding anything back.

Lucetta added, “You mar the concord with too harsh a descant.”

“Concord” is “harmony,” and “descant” is “variation on the tune.”

Lucetta added, “There lacks only a mean to fill your song.”

The “mean” is in between soprano and bass — a tenor. In other words, Julia needed a tenor — a man such as Proteus. If she had a man, her song would sound good, and she would achieve Aristotle’s mean between extremes: She would have good temper, which is the mean between the extreme of anger and the extreme of passivity or not caring.

Julia replied, “The mean is drowned with your unruly bass.”

An “unruly bass” is an “uncontrolled bass voice,” while the homonym “unruly base” applied to behavior refers to “uncontrolled bad behavior” — or “unruly base” could mean “unruly foundation” or “unruly character.”

“Indeed, I bid the base for Proteus,” Lucetta said.

She meant that she was attempting to sing bass in the absence of Proteus, who as a male would be more likely than she to succeed at it. That was a way of saying that she was attempting to do the work of Proteus, whom she admired and regarded as a good catch for Julia. She also was referring to a chase. In the game “Prisoner’s Base,” a child would use the phrase “Bid the base” to challenge another child to chase and try to catch him. On Proteus’ behalf, Lucetta was challenging Julia to chase after him.

Lucetta handed Julia the letter.

“This babble shall not henceforth trouble me,” Julia said. “This letter has created a fuss with its declarations of love!”

After quickly glancing at the letter, she tore it into pieces and dropped the pieces on the ground.

Lucetta stooped to pick up the pieces, but Julia ordered, “Get you gone, and let the pieces of paper lie there. You are touching them just to anger me.”

Leaving, Lucetta muttered, “She pretends to be angry; but she would be very happy to be angered like this with another letter.”

Julia overheard her.

Alone, Julia said, “No, I wish I were angered like this with the same letter — I wish that it were still in one piece! Oh, hateful hands, to tear such loving words! My hands are injurious wasps that feed on such sweet honey and kill with your stings the bees that yield it!

“I’ll kiss each piece of paper to make amends.

“Look, here is written ‘*kind Julia.*’ It should be ‘unkind Julia!’ To get revenge on your ingratitude, I throw your name — Julia! — against the bruising stones and I tramp contemptuously on your disdain.

“And here is written ‘*love-wounded Proteus.*’ Poor wounded name! My bosom shall be a bed where you can lodge until your wound is thoroughly healed.”

She kissed the piece of paper before putting it in a pocket over her chest, saying, “Thus I treat your wound with a healing kiss.”

A breeze began to blow in the garden, and Julia said, “But twice or thrice the name ‘Proteus’ was written down. Be calm, good wind, and do not blow a word away until I have found each letter in the letter, except my own name, which some whirlwind can carry to a rugged, fearful, hanging rock and throw my name from there into the raging sea!

“Look, here in one line is his name twice written: ‘*Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus, to the sweet Julia.*’ The part of the scrap of paper that bears my name I’ll tear away. And yet I

will not, since he couples it so prettily to his complaining names.

“I fold the piece of paper so that my name touches his name, one on top of the other. Now names, you can kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.”

The kind of “contention” she meant was the kind that sometimes results in babies.

Lucetta came back into the garden and said, “Madam, dinner is ready, and your father is waiting for you.”

“Well, let us go,” Julia replied.

“What, shall these pieces of paper lie like telltales here?”

“If you value them, it is best that you should take them up.”

“No, I was taken up — rebuked — for laying them down. Yet here they shall not lie, for fear of their catching cold.”

The chase and resultant capture that result from a love letter should be hot.

Lucetta picked up the pieces of the letter.

“I see you have a month’s mind for them,” Julia said.

“A month’s mind” is a strong inclination or desire. In the ninth month of pregnancy, a woman often is of a mind to eat certain foods, and she had better get what she wants or else.

“Yes, madam, you may say what sights you see,” Lucetta replied. “I see things, too, although you may think that my eyes are closed.”

Lucetta meant that she knew that Julia had a month’s mind for Proteus despite what Julia had said.

No longer angry, Julia said, “Come, come; are you ready to go?”

— 1.3 —

Antonio, Proteus’ father, was talking to Panthino, his servant. They were in a room of Antonio’s house in Verona.

“Tell me, Panthino, what serious talk was that which my brother was having with you in the cloister?”

“We were talking about his nephew Proteus, your son.”

“Why, what about him?”

“He wondered that your lordship would allow him to spend his youth at home, while other men, of slender and insignificant reputation, make their sons seek advancement in the world. Some sons go to the wars to seek their fortune there. Some travel to discover islands far away. Some go to the studious universities. For any or all of these exercises, he said that Proteus your son was suitable, and he requested me to press you to no longer allow Proteus to spend his time at home. He will regret in his old age not having traveled when he was young.”

“You don’t much need to press me to do that which I have been seriously thinking about this month. I have considered well Proteus’ waste of time and how he cannot be an accomplished man unless he is tested and tutored in the world. Experience is achieved by industry, and it is perfected by the swift course of time. We learn from trying hard to accomplish something and from growing older. So tell me, where would it be best for me to send him?”

Panthino replied, “I think your lordship is not ignorant that Proteus’ friend and companion, youthful Valentine, is now attending the Emperor in his royal court at Milan.”

The Emperor was the ruler of the territory; another of his titles was Duke of Milan.

“I do know it well,” Antonio said.

“It would be good, I think, if your lordship should send him there. He shall practice tilts and tournaments — military exercises — there. He shall also hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen, and see every exercise worthy of his youth and nobleness of birth.”

“I like your counsel,” Antonio said. “You have well advised me, and you can see how well I like your advice by how quickly I put it into action. As quickly as possible, I will send Proteus to the Emperor’s court.”

“Let it wait until tomorrow, if it pleases you,” Panthino said, “because Don Alphonso and other gentlemen who are well esteemed are journeying to Milan to salute the Emperor and to hand over their service to his will.”

“They will be good company,” Antonio said, “so Proteus shall go with them.”

He looked up and saw Proteus entering the garden and said, “He has come at exactly the right moment. I will break the news to him now about what I am going to have him do.”

Proteus, at some distance from his father and Panthino, was reading a love letter from Julia.

He said to himself, “Sweet love! Sweet lines! Sweet life! Here is her handwriting, the agent of her heart. Here is her oath for love, her honor’s pledge. Oh, I wish that our fathers would applaud our loves and seal our happiness with their consents! Oh, Heavenly Julia!”

Antonio and Panthino walked over to Proteus, and Antonio asked, “How are you? What letter are you reading there?”

“May it please your lordship, it is a word or two of greetings sent from Valentine in Milan and delivered by a friend who came from him.”

“Lend me the letter; let me see what his news is,” Antonio asked.

“There is no news, my lord, except that he writes about how happily he lives, how well beloved and daily honored he is by the Emperor, and that he wishes that I were with him so I could be the partner of his fortune.”

“What do you think about Valentine’s wish for you?”

“I will obey your lordship’s will and not be dependent on his friendly wish.”

“My will is somewhat in agreement with his wish for you,” Antonio said.

Proteus looked surprised.

Antonio said, "Don't be surprised that I now suddenly have made plans for you because what I will, I will, and there's an end to it."

"I am resolved that you shall spend some time with Valentine in the Emperor's court. Whatever monetary allowance he receives from his family, you shall receive a comparable allowance from me. Tomorrow, you must be ready to begin your journey to Milan. Don't try to make excuses for not going, for my mind is made up."

"My lord, I cannot be ready as soon as tomorrow," Proteus said. "I won't have time to pack everything that I will need. Please, think about this for a day or two."

"Look, whatever you need that you leave behind shall be sent after you," Antonio said. "Talk no more of staying in Verona! Tomorrow you must go to Milan."

He then said, "Come on, Panthino: you shall be employed to hasten Proteus on his journey."

Antonio and Panthino exited.

Alone, Proteus said to himself, "Just now, I shunned the fire for fear of being burned and instead drenched myself in the sea, where I am drowned. I was afraid to show my father Julia's letter, lest he should object to my love. As a result, he has taken advantage of my own excuse and made the greatest possible obstacle to my love."

"Oh, how this spring of love resembles the uncertain glory of an April day, which now shows all the beauty of the Sun, and by and by a cloud takes it all away!"

Panthino returned and walked over to Proteus and said, "Sir Proteus, your father is calling for you. He is impatient; therefore, I ask you to please go."

Proteus said, "Why, this is how it is with me: My heart wants me to be obedient to my father, and yet a thousand times to my father's plan for me my heart answers 'no.'"

## CHAPTER 2

— 2.1 —

Valentine and Speed talked together in a room of the palace of the Duke of Milan. Earlier, Silvia, who was the Duke's daughter, had deliberately dropped her glove in front of Speed, knowing that he would pick it up and give it to Valentine, his master.

"Sir, here is your glove," Speed said.

Without looking at the glove, Valentine said, "It can't be mine; my gloves are on — I am wearing them."

"Why, then, this glove may be yours, for this glove is only one — and 'one' is only one letter different from 'on.'"

Valentine looked at the glove, recognized it as Silvia's glove, and said, "Ha! Let me see it. Yes, give it to me — it's mine. This glove is a sweet ornament that decks a thing divine! Ah, Silvia, Silvia!"

Speed shouted, "Madam Silvia! Madam Silvia!"

"Why are you yelling, sirrah?" Valentine asked.

"Sirrah" was a word used to address someone socially inferior to the speaker of the word, but Valentine liked Speed and sometimes called him "Sir." Speed usually called Valentine "Sir."

"She is not within hearing, sir."

"Why, sir, who asked you to call her?"

"Your worship, sir; or else I am mistaken."

"Well, you'll always be too forward."

"And yet the last time I was rebuked it was for being too slow."

"Sir, tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?"

"She whom your worship loves?" Speed asked.

"Why, how do you know that I am in love?"

"By these special signs: First, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to cross your arms and form a wreath like a melancholy malcontent. Second, you have learned to sing a love song, like a robin redbreast. Third, you have learned to walk alone, like one who has caught the plague and so is avoided by everyone. Fourth, you have learned to sigh, like a schoolboy who has lost his A B C schoolbook. Fifth, you have learned to weep, like a young girl who has buried her grandmother. Sixth, you have learned to fast, like one who is dieting. Seventh, you have learned to stay awake at night like one who fears being robbed. Eighth, you have learned to speak in a whining voice, like a beggar at Hallowmas: November 1.

"You were accustomed, when you laughed, to crow like a cock. You were accustomed, when you walked, to walk like a lion. You were accustomed, when you fasted, to fast immediately

after eating dinner. You were accustomed, when you looked sad, to look sad because of lack of money.

“But now you are so metamorphosed because you have fallen in love that, when I look at you, I can hardly recognize that you are my master.”

“Are all these things perceived in me?” Valentine asked.

“They are all perceived without you,” Speed replied.

He meant that they could be perceived by looking at Valentine. His exterior appearance and his behavior showed that he was in love.

“Without me? That is impossible. If I am absent, these things cannot be perceived.”

“Without you? On your exterior?” Speed said. “You are wrong when you say that your follies cannot be perceived: These follies of yours can certainly be perceived, for, without you — that is, unless you — were so simple, no one would be able to tell that you are in love. But what you are is simple — it is easy to understand that you are in love. Seeing that you are in love presents no difficulty to anyone who sees you.

“You are so without these follies — these follies are so pervasive in your appearance — that these follies are within you — they are a part of you — and they shine through you like the water in a urinal, so that not an eye that sees you but is a physician to comment on your malady.”

Physicians of that time would have patients pee into a glass urinal. The physicians would examine the color of the water, aka urine, and thereby learn about the health of the patient. By being so much in love, Valentine was exhibiting the symptoms of lovesickness so obviously that anyone seeing him could diagnose his illness.

Valentine said, “Tell me, do you know my lady Silvia?”

“She whom you stare at as she is sitting and eating supper?” Speed replied.

“Have you observed that? She is the woman I mean.”

“Why, sir, I know her not,” Speed said, using the Biblical meaning of “know.”

“You say that you know her by my staring at her, and yet you do not know her?”

“Is she not hard-favored, sir?” Speed asked.

“Hard-favored” meant “ugly.”

“She is not as fair, boy, as she is well-favored. She is not as beautiful as she is charming.”

“Sir, I know that well enough,” Speed replied.

“What do you know?”

“That she is not so fair as she is, by you, well-favored.”

“By “well-favored,” Speed meant “partial.” Valentine was partial to Silvia and looked on her favorably.

“I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favor — her grace and kindness — is infinite,” Valentine said.

“That’s because the one is painted and the other is out of all count,” Speed said.

Women who used cosmetics were said to paint their faces.

“What do you mean by ‘painted’ — and by ‘out of all count’?” Valentine asked.

“Sir, her face is so painted in order to make her fair, aka attractive, that no man takes any account of, aka values, her beauty.”

“Don’t you think anything of my opinion?” Valentine said. “I count her as a beautiful woman.”

“You never saw her since she was deformed,” Speed said.

Speed meant that Valentine was not seeing Silvia as she really was. He was looking at her with the eyes of love, and those eyes changed her form and made her more beautiful to Valentine. A lover cannot see a loved one as she really is.

“How long has she been deformed?” Valentine asked.

“Ever since you loved her.”

“I have loved her ever since I saw her; and I still see her as beautiful.”

“If you love her, you cannot see her,” Speed said.

“Why not?”

“Because Love is blind. Oh, I wish that you had my eyes, or that your own eyes had the lights they used to have when you laughed at Sir Proteus because he walked around with his stockings ungartered because he was so in love that he had forgotten his garters!”

“If I were able to see, what would I see?”

“Your own present folly and her surpassing deformity. Sir Proteus, being in love, could not see to garter his stockings, but you, being in love, are worse off than Proteus because you cannot see to put on your stockings. He walks around without garters, while you walk around without garters and stockings.”

“Perhaps, boy, you are in love because this past morning you could not see to wipe and clean my shoes.”

“That is true, sir,” Speed said. “I was in love with my bed. I thank you: You beat me because of my love, which makes me all the bolder to twit you because of your love.”

Valentine said, “In conclusion, I stand affected by and devoted to her. I continue to love Silvia.”

“I wish you were seated so that your affection would cease,” Speed replied.

“Last night she asked me to write some lines to someone she loves,” Valentine said.

“And have you?”

“I have.”

“Aren’t they lamely written?” Speed asked.

“No, boy,” Valentine replied. “I have written them as well as I can write them. Quiet! Here she comes.”

Speed looked up and saw Silvia walking toward them. He thought, *Now I will see an excellent puppet show! Silvia will be more than a puppet because she is using Valentine — in a good way — and making him her puppeteer!*

Speed was quick-witted. He knew that Silvia was in love with Valentine, as Valentine was with her. He had seen how they acted around each other, and he had seen Silvia deliberately drop her handkerchief so that he could pick it up and give it to Valentine. Because of that, he could guess that the lines she had asked Valentine to write were a love letter that was not written to another man. Silvia had made Valentine write a love letter for her — a love letter that she was going to give to him! A puppeteer provides words for the puppets, and Valentine had written a love letter for Silvia. Valentine, the puppeteer, was providing the words for Silvia, the puppet. But Silvia was more than a puppet because she had been the one who had made Valentine write those words.

Silvia walked over to Valentine and Speed.

“Madam and mistress, a thousand good mornings,” Valentine said.

A mistress is a woman who is loved.

Speed, amused by the greeting, thought, *Simply say, “Good day.” Here’s a million of manners — Valentine is really overdoing it!*

Silvia replied, “Sir Valentine and servant, to you two thousand good mornings.”

In this culture, one meaning of “servant” is “a man who loves and serves a woman.”

Speed thought, *Valentine is in love with Silvia, and so he ought to show his interest in her, and Silvia is giving him interest. He wished her a thousand good mornings and she doubled it to two thousand — that’s quite a high rate of interest!*

“As you asked me, I have written your letter to the secret nameless loved one of yours; this was a task that I was very unwilling to proceed in except that I wanted to be of service to your ladyship.”

Valentine gave Silvia the letter, which she looked over and then said, “I thank you, gentle servant. It is very well written.”

“Now trust me, madam, I wrote it with difficulty,” Valentine said. “Because I was ignorant about who would receive the letter, I wrote randomly and very uncertainly.”

“Perhaps you think that the letter was not worth taking so many pains to write?”

“No, madam; so long as it helps you, I will write, if you command me to, a thousand times as much,” Valentine said. “And yet —”

Silvia was pleased with his response up until the “And yet —”

She interrupted, "A pretty period! Well, I can guess the sequel."

A period is a full stop: a complete end. However, "And yet" showed that more words would form a sequel. Valentine wanted to be of service to her, and yet —

Silvia continued, "And yet I will not state the sequel; and yet I care not; and yet take this letter again; and yet I thank you, and I intend hereafter to trouble you no more."

She handed him the letter that he had written for her.

Speed thought, *And yet you will trouble him some more; and there will be yet another "yet." You are in love, Silvia. You will not leave Valentine alone.*

"What does your ladyship mean?" Valentine asked. "Don't you like the letter?"

"Yes, yes; the lines are very ingeniously written, but since you wrote them unwillingly, take them again."

Valentine declined to accept the letter.

Silvia repeated, "Take these lines."

Valentine said, "Madam, these lines are for you."

"Yes, yes," Silvia said, "you wrote them, sir, at my request. But I want nothing to do with them; they are for you; I would have had them written more movingly."

"If you want, I will write your ladyship another love letter."

"And when it's written, for my sake read it over, and if it pleases you, so be it, but if it does not please you, why, so be it."

"If the letter pleases me, madam, what then?" Valentine asked.

"Why, if it pleases you, take it as a reward for your labor," Sylvia said.

This was a pretty big hint that the love letter was written especially for Valentine: He was its intended audience. Unfortunately, Valentine could be dense in matters of love. Fortunately, Speed was quick-witted and knew exactly what Silvia was doing and why she was doing it.

Silvia said to Valentine, "And so, good morning, servant."

She exited.

Speed said, "Oh, this jest is as unseen, inscrutable, invisible, as a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a steeple! My master is acting as a suitor to her, and she has taught her suitor, who is her pupil, to become her tutor.

"Oh, what an excellent device for attaining what she wants! Was there ever heard a better plan? She has made my master, who is a scribe, write a love letter to himself."

"What is it, sir?" Valentine asked. "Why are you talking to yourself? What are you reasoning about with yourself?"

"I was not reasoning; I was rhyming," Speed replied. "It is you who have the reason."

“Reason to do what?”

“To be a spokesman for Madam Silvia.”

“A spokesman? To whom?”

“To yourself,” Speed said. “Why, she is wooing you by using a figure.”

A “figure” is an “ingenious device.” For example, a figure of speech is an ingenious use of language.

“What figure?”

“A letter, I should say.”

“What do you mean? She has not written to me.”

“Why should she write to you, when she has made you write to yourself? What? Don’t you perceive — understand — what is going on?”

“No, believe me,” Valentine said.

“There is no believing you, indeed, sir. What Silvia is doing should be obvious. But did you perceive her earnest?”

Speed meant that Silvia was earnest in loving Valentine, but Valentine understood “earnest” as meaning “down payment” or “initial installment.”

Valentine said, “She gave me none, except an angry word.”

“Why, she has given you a letter.”

“That’s the letter I wrote to her loved one.”

“And that letter she has delivered to her loved one, and there is an end to the matter.”

“I wish it would be no worse than this,” Valentine said.

“I’ll warrant you, this end is as good as you could wish because you have often written to her, and she, because of modesty, or else because she lacked leisure time, could not reply to you, or else she feared that some messenger might learn whom she loved, and so she herself has taught her loved one himself to write to her lover. All this I speak exactly, as if it were written down and in print, for in the print of the letter I found it.

“Why muse you, sir? It is dinner-time.”

“I have dined,” Valentine said. “I have feasted on Silvia’s beauty.”

“Yes, but pay attention, sir,” Speed said. “Although the chameleon Love can feed on the air, I am one who is nourished by my victuals, and would gladly eat. Oh, be not like your mistress; be moved, be moved.”

Silvia’s meeting with Valentine was not entirely satisfactory to him; he had not been moved the way she wanted him to be moved. She wanted him to take action, not just look at her.

Valentine and Speed moved to the room where dinner was served.

— 2.2 —

In the garden of Julia's father's house in Verona, Julia and Proteus were speaking. Proteus was leaving for Milan, and this was their farewell to each other.

"Have patience, gentle Julia," Proteus said. "Be calm."

"I must, when there is no remedy."

"When I possibly can, I will return."

"If you turn not, you will return the sooner," Julia said.

She meant that if he did not turn his attention to another woman, he would return sooner to Verona.

She gave him a ring and said, "Keep this remembrance — this love token — for your Julia's sake."

"Why then, we'll make an exchange of rings," Proteus said.

He gave her a ring and said, "Here, take this."

"And we will seal the bargain with a holy kiss," Julia said.

They kissed.

Proteus said, "Here is my hand to pledge my true constancy — my true fidelity — to you."

They held hands.

He added, "And when an hour passes without my sighing for you, Julia, then I wish that during the next ensuing hour some foul mischance may torment me for forgetting my love!

"My father awaits my coming; don't answer me. The tide of the sea is high now and I must leave. Don't cry. Your tide of tears will keep me here longer than I should.

"Julia, farewell!"

Julia exited.

Proteus said, "What, gone without a word? Yes, true love should do so. True love cannot speak; truth is better adorned and honored by deeds than by words."

Panthino walked over to Proteus and said, "Sir Proteus, you are awaited."

"Go; I am coming. I am coming. It's a pity! This parting strikes poor lovers dumb."

—2.3 —

Proteus' servant, Launce, talked to himself in a garden. With him was his dog, Crab. Crab apples are sour, and the dog was crabby and sour-natured. Launce was preparing to leave the garden and join his master on board ship so he could serve him in Milan. Only 100 or so miles separated Milan and Verona, but at the time this was considered a long distance that could be dangerous to travel. Launce carried a walking staff.

Launce said, "No, I am not ready to stop crying yet. It will be an hour before I have finished weeping. All the members of the Launce family have this same fault.

"I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and I am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court."

Launce frequently misused words. "By "proportion," he meant "portion." By "prodigious," he meant "prodigal." By "Imperial," he meant "Emperor."

He added, "I think Crab, my dog, is the sourest-natured dog that lives. My mother is weeping, my father is wailing, my sister is crying, our maid is howling, our cat is wringing her hands, and all our house is in a great perplexity, and yet this cruel-hearted cur did not shed one tear. He is a stone, a very pebble stone, and he has no more pity in him than a dog does. A hard-hearted Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, who has no eyes, you see, wept herself blind at my parting."

Launce took off his shoes, put them on a table, and said, "I'll show you the manner of it. This right shoe is my father — no, this left shoe is my father. No, no, this left shoe is my mother — no, that cannot be so neither. Wait! Yes, it is so, it is so, my left shoe has the worser sole — and women, as is well known in my society, have souls worser than the souls of men. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, which is obviously appropriate, and this shoe is my father."

He dropped the shoe and said, "Damn it!"

He picked it up and said, "There it is. Now, sit. This staff is my sister, for, you see, she is as white as a lily and as slender as a wand. This hat is Nan, our maid. I am the dog. No, the dog is himself, and I am the dog — wait! The dog is me, and I am myself; yes, that is correct.

"Now I come to my father. Father, give me your blessing. Now the shoe should not speak a word because of weeping. Now I should kiss my father; well, he weeps on.

"Now I come to my mother. Oh, I wish that she could speak now like an excitable woman! Well, I now kiss her."

He kissed the shoe, which resulted in smelling the shoe, and he said, "Why, there it is; here's my mother's breath exactly.

"Now I come to my sister."

He waved the staff in the air while making a whooshing sound and said, "Listen to the moan she makes while mourning.

"Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears. My tears drop onto the ground and keep the dust down."

Panthino, Antonio's servant, entered the garden and said, "Launce, leave, leave, you must get onboard! Your master is onboard the ship, which is anchored in the harbor. You are to get in a rowboat and go into the harbor and join him.

"What's the matter? Why are you weeping, man? Leave, ass! You'll lose the tide and the ship will sail without you, if you tarry any longer."

Launce replied, "It does not matter if the tied were lost; for it is the unkindest tied that ever any man tied."

“What’s the unkindest tide?” Panthino asked.

“Why, he that’s tied here — Crab, my dog.”

“Tut, man, I mean that you will lose the flood of water, aka high tide, and, in losing the flood, you will lose your voyage, and, in losing your voyage, you will lose your master, and, in losing your master, you will lose your job, and, in losing your job —”

Launce put his hand over Panthino’s mouth.

Panthino moved Launce’s hand away and asked, “Why did you cover my mouth?”

“For fear you should lose your tongue.”

“Where should I lose my tongue?”

“In your tale.”

“In your *tail!*” Panthino shrieked.

“Lose the tide, and the voyage, and the master, and the job, and the tied! Why, man, if the river were dry, I would be able to fill it with my tears; if the wind were down, I could drive the boat forward with my sighs.”

“Come, come away, man,” Panthino said. “I was sent to call you.”

“Sir, call me what you dare to call me.”

“Will you go?”

“Well, I will go.”

They exited. Launce was ready to board the ship.

— 2.4 —

Silvia, Valentine, Thurio, and Speed were together in a room in the palace of the Duke of Milan. Silvia was the daughter of the Duke of Milan, and Thurio was a rival suitor for Silvia.

“Servant!” Silvia said to Valentine.

“Mistress?” he replied.

This angered Thurio. As a rival suitor for Silvia, he wanted Silvia to be his mistress and he wanted to be her servant. In this context, a mistress was a female sweetheart and a servant was her loved one.

Speed said, “Master, Sir Thurio is frowning at you.”

“Yes, boy, it’s because of love,” Valentine replied.

“Not love of you.”

“Love of my mistress, then.”

“It would be good if you were to knock him down.”

Speed exited.

Silvia said, "Servant, you are solemn."

"Indeed, madam, I seem so," Valentine replied.

"Do you seem to be something that you are not?" Thurio asked, wishing that Valentine only seemed to be Silvia's servant.

"Perhaps I do," Valentine replied.

"So do counterfeits," Thurio said.

A counterfeit is an imposter, a fake, a sham, a pretender.

"So do you."

"What do I seem to be that I am not?" Thurio asked.

"Wise."

"What evidence do you have that I am not wise?"

"Your folly."

"And how can you observe my folly?"

"I observe it in your jerkin," Valentine replied.

Jerkins and doublets are kinds of jackets.

"My jerkin is a doublet."

"Well, then, I'll double your folly," Valentine said.

"What!" Thurio exclaimed.

"What, are you angry, Sir Thurio?" Silvia asked. "Do you change color? Is your face red because you are angry?"

"Give him permission to change color, madam," Valentine said. "He is a kind of chameleon that changes color."

"I am the kind of chameleon that has more mind to feed on your blood than live in your air," Thurio replied.

People in this society believed that chameleons did not eat, but got all their nourishment from the air. Of course, "to live in your air" included the meaning "to hear you speak."

"You have said, sir. You have spoken to the point."

"Yes, sir," Thurio said, "and I have done, too, for this time."

He was implying that at some time in the future he would do more — he would fight Valentine.

"I know well, sir, that you have done," Valentine said. "You always end before you begin."

Valentine was accusing Thurio of picking fights, but never actually fighting. He was also accusing Thurio of having little wit — the little wit he had ran out while his opponents' wit

was still strong. Valentine was also hinting that Thurio suffered from premature ejaculation.

“This is a fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off,” Silvia said.

Perhaps Silvia had heard that Thurio suffered from premature ejaculation.

“It is indeed, madam,” Valentine said. “We thank the giver.”

“Who is that, servant?” Silvia asked.

“It is yourself, sweet lady; for you gave the fire,” Valentine replied. “You were the match that fired the cannons that shot the volley of words. Sir Thurio borrows his wit from your ladyship’s looks, and he naturally spends what he borrows in your company.”

“Sir, if you spend word for word with me,” Thurio said, “I shall make your wit bankrupt.”

“I know it well, sir,” Valentine said. “You have a treasury of words, and, I think, no other treasure to give your servants, for it appears by their threadbare liveries that they live by your bare words.”

“No more, gentlemen, no more,” Silvia said. “Here comes my father.”

The Duke of Milan walked over to them and said, “Now, daughter Silvia, you are hard beset. You have to contend with two admirers.

“Sir Valentine, your father’s in good health. What do you say about a letter from your family that contains much good news?”

“My lord, I will be thankful,” Valentine replied, “to any messenger bearing good news who and that comes from Verona.”

“Do you know Don Antonio, your countryman?” the Duke of Milan asked.

“Yes, my good lord, I know the gentleman to be of worth and worthy estimation. Not without desert is he so well reputed.”

“Doesn’t he have a son?”

“Yes, my good lord; he has a son who well deserves the honor and regard of such a father,” Valentine replied.

“Do you know the son well?”

“I know him as well as I know myself, for from our infancy we have kept company and spent our hours together, and although I myself have been an idle truant, not using the sweet benefit of time to clothe my age with angel-like perfection, Sir Proteus, for that’s his name, has made use and fair advantage of his days. He is young in years, but old in experience. His head is unmellowed because his hair is not gray, but his judgment is ripe. All the praises that I now bestow on him are far behind his worth. He has in feature and in mind all the good graces that grace a gentleman.”

“Believe me, sir, but if he is as good as you say he is, he is as worthy to win an Empress’ love as he is fitting to be an Emperor’s counselor,” the Duke of Milan said. “Well, sir, this gentleman has come to me, with commendations from great potentates, and here he means to spend his time for awhile. I think that this is not unwelcome news to you.”

“If I should have wished for something, it would have been for him to come here,” Valentine replied.

“Welcome him, then, according to his worth,” the Duke of Milan said. “Silvia, I am telling this to you, and to you, Sir Thurio. As for Valentine, I need not tell him this. I will send Proteus hither to you quickly.”

The Duke of Milan exited.

Valentine said to Silvia, “This is the gentleman I told your ladyship would have come along with me, except that his mistress held his eyes locked in her crystal looks. He did not come with me because he was in love.”

“Probably his mistress has enfranchised and freed his eyes because she has enchanted another man’s eyes,” Silvia said.

“No,” Valentine said. “To be sure, I think she holds his eyes prisoners still. I am sure that he still loves her.”

“If he is in love, then he should be blind,” Silvia said. “And if he is blind, then how can he see to travel to seek you?”

“Why, lady, Love has twenty pairs of eyes,” Valentine said.

Thurio interrupted, “They say that Love has not an eye at all. Cupid is blind.”

Valentine replied, “Love has not an eye at all when it comes to seeing such lovers, Thurio, as yourself. When near a homely object, Love can close his eyes.”

Silvia said, “Enough, enough, no more arguing; here comes the gentleman.”

Thurio exited as Proteus entered the room.

“Welcome, dear Proteus!” Valentine said. “Mistress, I ask you to confirm his welcome with some special honor for him.”

“His worth is guarantee for his welcome hither, if this man is he whom you often have wished to hear from,” Silvia replied.

“Mistress, it is he,” Valentine said. “Sweet lady, take him into your service and let him be my fellow-servant to your ladyship.”

Valentine did not mean for the service to be that of a lover, but instead that of a friend. After all, Proteus had recently expressed his love for Julia.

“I am too low a mistress for so high a servant,” Silvia said.

“That is not so, sweet lady,” Proteus said, “for I am too mean a servant to receive a look from such a worthy mistress.”

“Stop disparaging yourselves,” Valentine said. “Sweet lady, take him into your service.”

“I will boast only of my duty as your servant,” Proteus said. “I will speak of nothing else.”

“And duty never yet did lack his reward,” Silvia replied. “Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.”

“I will fight to the death anyone who says that, except you,” Proteus said.

“Do you mean to fight him who says that you are welcome?” Silvia asked.

“I mean to fight him who says that you are worthless,” Proteus replied.

Thurio returned and said to Silvia, “Madam, my lord your father wants to speak with you.”

“I will go to him,” Silvia said. “Come, Sir Thurio, go with me.”

She said to Proteus, “Once more, new servant, welcome.”

She then said to both Valentine and Proteus, “I’ll leave you two to talk about news at your home city: Verona. When you have done, I hope that you will come to me.”

“We’ll both go to your ladyship,” Proteus said.

Silvia and Thurio exited.

Valentine asked Proteus, “Now, tell me, how is everyone in Verona?”

“Your friends and family are well, and they have sent you many greetings.”

“And how are your friends and family?”

“I left them all in health,” Proteus said. “They are well.”

“How is your lady, Julia?” Valentine asked. “And how is your love for each other thriving?”

“My tales of love are likely to weary you,” Proteus said. “I know you take no joy in talking about love.”

“That used to be true, Proteus, but my life is altered now,” Valentine replied. “I have done penance for condemning Love, whose high imperious and magisterial thoughts have punished me with bitter fasts, with penitential groans, with nightly tears and daily heart-sore sighs. To get revenge for my contempt of love, Love has chased sleep from my enthralled eyes and made them stay awake and watch my own heart’s sorrow.

“Oh, gentle Proteus, Love’s a mighty lord and has so humbled me that I confess there are no woe and sorrow that compare to Love’s punishment, and yet in Love’s service I experience the greatest joy on Earth.

“Now let us have no discourse, unless we talk of love. Now I can break my fast, and I can dine, eat, and sleep upon the mere name of Love.”

“Enough,” Proteus said. “I read your fortune in your eye. I knew immediately that you are in love. Was this woman I just met the idol whom you worship so?”

“Yes,” Valentine said. “Is she not a Heavenly saint?”

“No, but she is an Earthly paragon.”

“Call her divine.”

“I will not flatter her.”

“Oh, flatter me and tell me what I want to hear,” Valentine said, “for love delights in praises.”

“When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills,” Proteus said, remembering Valentine’s comments about love — the comments of a person who had never been in love. “Now I must minister similar bitter pills to you.”

“Then speak the truth of her,” Valentine said. “If she is not divine, then let her be a Principality, sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.”

A Principality is a member of one of the nine orders of angels: the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers; and the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

“Your mistress, Silvia, is sovereign to everyone on Earth except for my mistress: Julia,” Proteus replied.

“Sweet friend,” Valentine said, “except — exclude — no one from being under the sovereignty of Silvia except — unless — you will take exception to my love.”

“Have I not reason to prefer my own mistress?” Proteus asked.

“And I will help you to prefer — promote, advance — her, too,” Valentine said. “She shall be dignified with this high honor — to bear my lady’s train, lest the base earth should from her train chance to steal a kiss if it should trail on the ground. If the earth did steal such a kiss, it might grow so proud from enjoying that kiss that it might disdain to let the summer-swelling flowers take root in it and it might make rough winter last forever.”

“Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this?” Proteus asked. “Where did you learn to brag in this way about your mistress?”

“Pardon me, Proteus. All I can say about Silvia is nothing — it completely and inadequately describes her, whose worth makes other worthies nothing. Silvia is alone — she is unique.”

“If she is alone, then let her alone,” Proteus said.

“Not for the world,” Valentine replied. “Why, man, she is my own, and I am as rich in having such a jewel as twenty seas, if all their grains of sand were pearls, the water was nectar, and the rocks were pure gold.”

Valentine added, “Forgive me for not focusing my attention on you. As you can see, I am doting upon my love. My foolish rival, Thurio, is a man whom Silvia’s father likes only because his possessions and wealth are so huge. Thurio has accompanied Silvia as she sees her father, and I must go after them because love, you know, is full of jealousy.”

“But Silvia loves you?” Proteus asked.

“Yes, and we are secretly engaged to be married,” Valentine said. “We have decided to elope, and we have decided on our marriage-hour and have made a cunning plan for our flight. I will climb to her window, using a ladder made of rope, and together we have plotted and agreed on everything necessary for my happiness — marriage to Silvia will make me happy.”

“Good Proteus, go with me to my chamber so that you can aid me with your advice.”

“You go on ahead of me,” Proteus replied. “I shall seek you later. Right now I must go to the harbor to unload from the ship some necessaries that I need now. As soon as I am done, I will go to you.”

“Will you make haste?” Valentine asked. “Will you hurry?”

“I will.”

Valentine exited.

Alone, Proteus said to himself, “Even as one heat expels another heat, or as one nail by strength drives out another nail, so a newer object of my affection makes me quite forget the remembrance of my former love.

“Is it my praise, or Valentine’s praise, Silvia’s true perfection, or my wrongful violation of loyalty to my former love, that makes me reasonless — without cause — to reason thus, to justify my loss of love for one woman and my new love for another woman? What is causing me to make up excuses for my lack of loyalty to the woman I loved in Verona?

“Silvia is beautiful; and so is Julia, whom I love — make that whom I did love, for now my love is thawed. My love is like a waxen image held near a fire; it has melted and bears no resemblance to the thing it was.

“I think that my devotion and loyalty to Valentine is cold, and that my love for him as a friend is not like it used to be. Oh, but I love his lady as a lover much too much, and that’s the reason I love him as a friend so little.

“How shall I dote on her when I see more of her, I who at first sight began to love her! It is only her picture — her appearance — I have so far seen, and that has dazzled my reason’s light. But when I am able to look on her inward perfections, there is no doubt that I shall be blinded.

“If I can check and stop my erring love, I will; if I cannot, to gain her I’ll use all my skill.”

— 2.5 —

On a street in Verona, Speed, the servant of Valentine, and Launce, the servant of Proteus, met. They knew each other well enough to exchange friendly insults and to play jokes on each other.

Speed knew that Launce sometimes misused words, so he teased him by saying, “Launce! By my honesty, welcome to Milan!”

“Do not perjure yourself, sweet youth, for I am not welcome,” Launce said. “I believe this always, that a man is never ruined and destroyed until he is hanged, and a man is never welcome to a place until the tavern bill is paid and the hostess says, ‘Welcome!’”

“Come on, you madcap, I’ll go to the alehouse with you in a moment,” Speed said. “There, for one bill of five pence, you shall have five thousand welcomes. But, sirrah, how did your master, Proteus, part with Madam Julia?”

“Truly, after they embraced in earnest, they parted very cordially in jest.”

“But shall she marry him?” Speed asked.

“No.”

“What then? Shall he marry her?”

“No, neither.”

“What, are they broken?” Speed asked.

He meant to ask whether they had broken up, but Launce took the word “broken” literally.

“No, they are both as whole as a fish.”

“As whole as a fish” meant “healthy, but “whole” sounds like “hole,” and “fish” is slang for “vagina,” something that Speed well knew.

“Why, then, how stands the matter with them?” Speed asked.

Speed knew that “stand” was sometimes used for “have an erection.”

“Like this,” Launce said. “When it stands well with him, it stands well with her.”

“What an ass are you! I don’t understand you,” Speed said, pretending not to understand.

“What a blockhead you are, since you cannot understand me!” Launce said. “Even my staff understands me.”

“What are you saying?”

“I say what I say, and I do what I do,” Launce replied. “Look, I’ll lean.”

He leaned on his staff and added, “My staff understands me.”

“It stands under you, indeed,” Speed said.

“Why, stand-under and under-stand is all one and the same thing.”

“But tell me truly,” Speed said. “Have Proteus and Julia made a marriage match? Will they be married?”

“Ask my dog,” Launce said. “If he says yes, there will be a wedding. If he says no, there will be a wedding. If he shakes his tail and says nothing, there will be a wedding.”

“The conclusion then is that there will be a wedding,” Speed said.

“You shall never get such a secret from me except by a parable,” Launce said. “I will tell you such a secret only indirectly, not straightforwardly.”

“It is OK that I learn such a secret indirectly,” Speed said. “But, Launce, what do you say about this? My master has become a notable lover! He is in love! A lover!”

“I never knew him to be otherwise,” Launce said.

“Other than how?” Speed said.

“Other than what you said. A notable lubber,” Launce replied.

A lubber is a clumsy oaf.

“Why, you whoreson ass, you mistake me,” Speed said.

He meant that Launce had made a mistake in hearing “lubber,” not “lover,” but Launce thought that Speed was saying that he had made the mistake of calling Speed, not Valentine, a lubber.

“Why, fool, I wasn’t calling you a lubber; I meant your master.”

“I tell you, my master has become a hot lover,” Speed said.

“Why, I tell you, I don’t care even if he burns himself in love,” Launce said. “If you want, go with me to the alehouse. If you don’t go with me, you are a Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the name of a Christian.”

“Why?”

“Because you do not have as much charity in you as it takes to go to the ale with a Christian. Will you go?”

The word “ale” used in this context could mean an alehouse or tavern, a country festival, or a church-ale, which was a festive fundraiser for a church.

“I am at your service,” Speed said, and he and Launce set off to go to an alehouse.

— 2.6 —

Proteus was alone in a room in the palace of the Duke of Milan.

He said to himself, “If I leave my Julia, I shall have broken my oath to love her. If I love Silvia, I shall have broken my oath to be faithful to Julia. If I wrong Valentine, I shall have badly broken my oath to be his friend. But even that power that gave me first my oath provokes me to this threefold perjury: Love bade me swear to love Julia and Love now bids me not to love Julia but to love Silvia instead.

“Oh, sweetly tempting Love, if you have sinned by tempting me, teach me, your tempted subject, to excuse it! At first I adored Julia, who is a twinkling star, but now I worship Silvia, who is a celestial Sun.

“Heedless vows may be heedfully broken; a thoughtless vow may be broken after careful thought.

“The man who wants his settled and decided will to teach his intelligence to exchange the bad — Julia — for the better — Silvia — lacks intelligence. Damn my irreverent tongue! You call Julia bad, whose sovereignty so often you have declared with twenty thousand soul-strengthening oaths.

“I cannot stop loving, and yet I do; but I stop loving Julia and begin loving Silvia. In doing so, I lose Julia and I lose Valentine. If I keep them as my mistress and my friend, I necessarily must lose myself. If I lose them, I find something else by their loss. If I lose Valentine, I find myself. If I lose Julia, I find Silvia.

“I to myself am dearer than a friend, for love is still most precious in itself. And Silvia — Heaven, which made her beautiful, knows! — shows that Julia is nothing but a swarthy Ethiopian and ugly in comparison.”

This society valued light skin more highly than dark skin.

Proteus continued, “I will forget that Julia is alive, remembering that my love for her is dead. And Valentine I’ll consider as an enemy, aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.

“I cannot now prove to be faithful to myself, unless I am treacherous to Valentine. Tonight he intends with a rope ladder to climb up to celestial Silvia’s chamber-window. He has told me, his competitor for Silvia, this secret.

“Soon I’ll give her father notice of their deceptive and intended flight. Her father, all enraged, will banish Valentine because her father intends that Thurio shall wed Silvia.

“But, once Valentine is gone, I’ll quickly use some sly trick to thwart stupid Thurio’s dull courtship of her.

“Love, lend me wings to achieve my goal swiftly, as you have lent me wit to plot this scheme!”

— 2.7 —

Julia and Lucetta were engaged in conversation in Julia’s chamber in her father’s house in Verona.

“Lucetta, give me advice,” Julia said. “Gentle girl, assist me. With kind love I entreat you, who are the writing tablet wherein all my thoughts are visibly written and engraved, to teach me and tell me some good means by which I may honorably and without hurting my reputation undertake a journey to my loving Proteus in Milan.”

“Sadly, the way to Milan is wearisome and long!” Lucetta said.

“A truly devoted pilgrim is not weary when it comes to crossing kingdoms with his feeble steps; much less weary shall she be who has Love’s wings with which to fly and when the flight is made to one so dear, of such divine perfection, as Sir Proteus.”

“You had better wait patiently until Proteus returns,” Lucetta said.

“Oh, don’t you know that his looks at me are my soul’s food? Pity the dearth of looks that have starved me and made me pine because I have been longing for that food for so long a time.

“If you knew the inward touch of love, you would as soon try to kindle fire by using snow as seek to quench the fire of love by using words.”

“I do not seek to quench your love’s hot fire, but I do seek to moderate the fire’s extreme rage, lest it should burn above the bounds of reason,” Lucetta said.

“The more you try to dam up the fire of love, the more it burns,” Julia said. “The current that with gentle murmur glides, you know, being stopped, impatiently rages. But when his fair course is not hindered, he makes sweet music with the enameled — variegated and brightly colored — stones, giving a gentle kiss to every grassy sedge that he overtakes in his pilgrimage, and so by many winding nooks he strays with willing sport to the wild ocean.

“If you let me go and do not hinder my course, I’ll be as patient as a gentle stream and make a pastime of each weary step, until the last step brings me to my love, and there I’ll rest, as after much turmoil a blessed soul does in Elysium, the blessed abode in the afterlife.”

“But what clothing will you wear during your journey?”

“I will not dress like a woman,” Julia said, “because I wish to prevent the immoral advances of lascivious men. Gentle Lucetta, outfit me with such clothing as some well-reputed page would wear.”

“Why, then, your ladyship must cut your hair,” Lucetta said.

“No, girl, I’ll tie my hair up in silken strings with twenty elaborate true-love knots. To be imaginative and fanciful like that may suit a youth of greater age than I shall pretend to be.”

“In what fashion, madam, shall I make your breeches?”

“That question makes as much sense as ‘Tell me, my good lord, with what waist dimensions will you wear your farthingale?’”

A farthingale was a hooped skirt; of course, men did not wear them. Women in this society did not wear breeches.

Julia continued, “Why, make my breeches in whatever fashion you like best, Lucetta.”

“You must have breeches with a codpiece, madam.”

A codpiece was an attachment sewn onto the front of the breeches over the male genitals.

“Lucetta!” a shocked Julia said. “That would be ugly and unsightly.”

“The breeches you must wear are not worth a pin unless you have a codpiece to stick pins on.”

Some men decorated their codpieces with ornamental pins.

“Lucetta, as you love me, let me have whatever breeches you think suitable and most mannerly — I must appear to be a man, but I hope to appear to be a man of good manners. But tell me, lass, how will people regard me for undertaking so immodest a journey? I am afraid that people will regard my journey as scandalous.”

“If you think so, then stay at home and don’t go,” Lucetta said.

“No, I will not stay at home.”

“Then don’t worry about getting a bad reputation, but go. If Proteus likes your journey when you come, it will not matter who’s displeased when you are gone. I am afraid, however, that he will scarcely be pleased with your journey.”

“That is the least, Lucetta, of my fears,” Julia said. “A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears, and particular instances of the infinity of his love guarantee that my Proteus will welcome me.”

“All these are servants to deceitful men,” Lucetta said. “Deceitful men swear oaths, cry, and seem to be infinitely loving.”

“Base men use them for base purposes!” Julia said. “But truer stars governed Proteus’ birth. The astrological influences on him are good. His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles, his love is sincere, his thoughts are immaculate, his tears are pure messengers sent from his heart, and his heart is as far from fraud as Heaven is from Earth.”

“Pray to Heaven that he proves to be the man you think he is, when you see him in Milan!”

“Now, as you love me, don’t do him the wrong of having a hard opinion of his truth. You can deserve my love only by loving him.

“Go with me now to my chamber, to take note of what I stand in need of to outfit me for my longing journey. All that is mine, I leave at your disposal: my goods, my lands, and my

reputation. For all this I ask only that you help me leave here. Come, don't say anything, but hop to it immediately!

"I am impatient at my delay."

## CHAPTER 3

— 3.1 —

The Duke of Milan, Thurio, and Proteus were in the garden of the Duke's palace in Milan.

The Duke of Milan said, "Sir Thurio, let us please be alone for a while. We have some secrets to confer about."

Thurio exited.

"Now, tell me, Proteus," the Duke of Milan said, "what do you want to talk about with me?"

"My gracious lord, that which I wish to reveal, the law of friendship bids me to conceal. But when I remember the gracious favors you have done for me, undeserving as I am, my duty to you urges me to utter that which otherwise no worldly good should draw from me.

"Know, worthy Prince, that Sir Valentine, my friend, this night intends to steal away with and elope with Silvia, your daughter. I myself was made privy to the plot. I know you have determined to bestow her on Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates. And I know that if she should thus be stolen away from you, it would be very vexatious to you, especially at your age. Thus, for the sake of my duty to you, I rather chose to thwart my friend in his intended plot rather than, by concealing it, heap on your head a pack of sorrows that would press you down — if this elopement were not prevented — to your untimely grave."

"Proteus, I thank you for your honest concern for me," the Duke of Milan said. "To repay you, you can ask me for favors while I live.

"This love of theirs I myself have often seen, sometimes when they have thought that I was fast asleep, and often I have thought about forbidding Sir Valentine to keep her company and to stay at my court. But because I was afraid that my suspicious guess might be wrong and could wrongly disgrace the man — I have always shunned rashness — I gave him gentle looks, hoping to find, if it were true, that which you have now disclosed to me.

"And, so that you may know I have feared this, knowing as I do that tender youth is soon tempted, I nightly lodge her in an upper tower, the key to which I have always kept, and from thence she cannot be conveyed away."

Proteus replied, "Know, noble lord, that they have devised a means — a rope ladder — by which he will climb to her chamber-window and fetch her down. The youthful lover now has gone to fetch a rope ladder, and he will come this way with it soon. Here, if you please, you may intercept him. But, my good Lord, intercept him so cunningly that he will not know that I have told you about his plot. Love of you, and not hatred for my friend, has made me tell you about this plot."

"Upon my honor, he shall never know that I had any information from you about this."

"Adieu, my lord," Proteus said. "Sir Valentine is coming."

Proteus exited the garden.

The Duke of Milan called, "Sir Valentine, where are you going so quickly?"

Not wanting to be rude, Valentine walked over to the Duke of Milan and said, "If it please your grace, a messenger is waiting for me to give him my letters so that he can bear them to my friends, and I am going now to deliver my letters to him."

"Are your letters important?"

"Their theme is my health and happiness at your court."

"Then they are not important, so stay with me awhile," the Duke of Milan said. "I want to talk with you about some affairs that closely concern me, which you must keep secret. You know that I have sought to match my friend Sir Thurio with my daughter; I want them to marry."

"I know it well, my lord," Valentine replied, "and, surely, the match will be rich and honorable; besides, the gentleman is full of virtue, bounty, worth, and qualities that are befitting for such a wife as your fair daughter. Cannot your Grace persuade her to fancy and love him?"

"No, trust me; she is obstinate, sullen, perverse, proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty. She neither acts like my child should act nor reveres me as a child should revere her father. And, may I say to you that this pride of hers, upon reflection, has made me cease to love her. I had thought that her child-like duty would have treated me with affection and kindness for the rest of my life, but I now am fully resolved to take a wife and turn out my daughter to whoever will take her in. I will let Silvia's beauty be her wedding-dowry because she does not value me and my possessions."

"What does your Grace want me to do in this matter?"

"There is a lady of Verona whom I love and am aiming to obtain as a wife, but she is fastidious and shy, and she does not esteem my aged eloquence. Therefore, I want you to be my tutor now — because long ago I forgot how to court a woman; besides, the fashion of the time has changed — and teach me how to act so that her Sun-bright eyes will value me."

The Duke of Milan had chosen to pretend that he loved a woman of Verona so that he could more plausibly ask Valentine, who was from Verona, to advise him.

"Win her with gifts," Valentine advised, "if she does not pay attention to words. More than quick and lively words, dumb jewels often in their silent nature move a woman's mind."

"But she scorned a present that I sent her," the Duke of Milan replied.

"A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her," Valentine said. "Send her another gift; never give up on obtaining her. A woman may scorn at first, but that makes the love that follows all the more. If she frowns, it is not because she hates you, but rather she frowns to make love grow greater in you. If she criticizes you, it is not to have you leave. Why, the fools become insane, if they are left alone. Take no repulse, whatever she says. If she says, 'Get out,' she does not mean 'Go away!' Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces; even if their faces are black, say they have angels' faces. Any man who has a tongue, I say, is no man, if with his tongue he cannot win a woman."

"But she whom I am talking about has been promised by her family to a youthful gentleman of worth, and she is kept severely from the visits of men, so no man has access by day to her."

"Why, if you can't see her by day, then I advise you to visit her by night."

“Yes, but the doors are locked and the keys are kept safe, so that no man has recourse to her by night,” the Duke of Milan said.

“What prevents anyone from entering her chamber through her window?”

“Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground, and it is built so that it juts out and no one can climb it without obvious risk to his life.”

“Why then, a ladder skillfully made of rope, to cast up, with a pair of anchoring hooks, would serve to scale another Hero’s tower — bold Leander would risk it.”

Leander swam across the Hellespont so he could visit Hero, his beloved, in her tower. She lit a lamp to guide him there.

The Duke of Milan said, “Now, as you are a nobly born gentleman, tell me where I may find such a ladder.”

“When would you use it? Please, sir, tell me that.”

“This very night; for Love is like a child, who longs for everything that he can come by.”

“By seven o’clock, I’ll get you such a ladder,” Valentine said.

“But, listen,” the Duke of Milan said. “I will go to her alone. How shall I best carry the ladder there?”

“The rope ladder will be light enough, my lord, that you may carry it under a cloak that has some length.”

“Will a cloak as long as yours serve the purpose?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“Then let me see your cloak,” the Duke of Milan said. “I’ll get me a cloak of the same length.”

“Why, any cloak will serve the purpose, my lord.”

“How shall I accustom myself to wearing a cloak?” the Duke of Milan asked. “Please, let me feel your cloak upon me.”

He pulled Valentine’s cloak off him and said, “What letter is this? What’s here? It is addressed, ‘To Silvia’! And here is a rope ladder suitable for my plan. I’ll be so bold for once to break the seal of this letter.”

He broke the seal and read the letter out loud:

*“My thoughts do lodge with my Silvia nightly,*

*“And slaves they are to me who send them flying:*

*“Oh, could their master come and go as freely and lightly,*

*“He himself would lodge where insensible they are lying!*

*“My message-bearing thoughts in the pocket over your pure bosom rest:*

*“While I, their king, who hither them urge and press,*

*“Do curse the grace, aka honor, that with such grace, aka success, has blessed them,*

*“Because I myself do lack my thoughts’ fortune:*

*“I curse myself, for my thoughts are sent by me,*

*“That they should lodge where their lord would be.”*

The Duke of Milan said, “What else is here?”

He read the rest of the letter out loud:

*“Silvia, this night I will free you.”*

The Duke of Milan said, “What is written in this letter is true, and here’s the rope ladder that you intended to use to elope with my daughter.

“Why, Phaëthon — for you are Merops’ son — will you aspire to guide the Heavenly car and with your daring folly burn the world? Will you try to reach stars because they shine on you?”

The Duke of Milan was referring to the myth of Phaëthon.

Phaëthon went to his father, the god Apollo, and asked to be allowed to drive the Sun-chariot across the sky and bring light to the world. But Phaëthon, doomed youth, was unable to control the stallions, and they ran wildly away with the Sun-chariot, wreaking havoc and destruction upon Humankind and the world by making the chariot come so close to the Earth that it set the Earth on fire. The King of the gods, Jupiter, saved Humankind and the world by throwing a thunderbolt at Phaëthon and killing him.

Although Phaëthon was the son of the god Apollo, the Duke of Milan said that he was the son of Merops, who was the mortal man who had married Phaëthon’s mother. The Duke of Milan was accusing Valentine of arrogant ambition, of trying to marry a woman who was above him: Silvia, the daughter of the Duke of Milan, who was also an Emperor.

The Duke of Milan continued, “Go, base intruder! Go, arrogant rogue! Bestow your fawning smiles on equal mates — women of your own social class — and know that my patience, more than anything you deserve, is the reason for your being allowed to depart from here. I could do worse to you than banish you! Thank me for this more than for all the too numerous favors I have given to you.

“But if you linger in my territories longer than the swiftest action will give you time to leave our royal court, by Heaven my wrath shall far exceed the love I ever bore my daughter or yourself.

“Be gone! I will not hear your vain excuses, but if you love your life, go speedily from here.”

The Duke of Milan exited.

“Why not give me death rather than living torment?” Valentine asked. “To die is to be banished from myself, and Silvia is myself. To be banished from her is to have self banished from self — a deadly banishment!

“What light is light, if Silvia is not seen? What joy is joy, if Silvia is not nearby, unless it is to *think* that she is nearby and feed upon the image but not the reality of perfection?”

“Unless I am by Silvia in the night, there is no music in the nightingale.

“Unless I look upon Silvia during the day, there is no day for me to look upon.

“She is my essence, my very life, and I cease to exist, if I am not by her fair influence fostered, illumined, cherished, kept alive.

“If I flee from his deadly doom, I am fleeing from death. If I stay here, I must expect death, but if I flee from here, I fly away from life.”

Proteus and Launce appeared, seeking Valentine.

Proteus said to Launce, “Run, boy, run, run, and seek him out.”

Launce saw Valentine and cried, “Soho! Soho!”

This hunting cry meant that the game — for example, a hare — had been sighted.

“What do you see?” Proteus asked.

“I see him whom we set out to find,” Launce said. “There’s not a hair on his head but it is a Valentine.”

A Valentine is a true lover right down to each of his hairs. But can Valentine be a true lover of a woman from whose presence he has been banished? In such a case, can Valentine be Valentine?

“Valentine?” Proteus asked.

“No,” Valentine replied.

“Who are you, then?” Proteus asked. “His ghost?”

“I am not his ghost, either,” Valentine replied.

“What are you then?”

“Nothing,” Valentine replied.

“Can nothing speak?” Launce asked. “Master, shall I strike? Shall I hit?”

“Who would you strike?” Proteus asked.

“Nothing,” Launce said.

“Villain, stop,” Proteus said to Launce.

“Why, sir, I’ll strike nothing,” Launce said.

He meant that he would not strike anything; even if he tried to strike a ghost, he would hit nothing because a ghost has no body.

Launce said to Proteus, “Please —”

Proteus interrupted, “Sirrah, I say, stop. Friend Valentine, let me have a word with you.”

“My ears are stopped and cannot hear good news because they have already heard so much bad news,” Valentine replied.

“Then in dumb silence I will bury my news because it is harsh, disagreeable, and bad,” Proteus said.

“Is Silvia dead?”

“No, Valentine.”

“There is no Valentine, indeed, for sacred Silvia. Has she forsworn and renounced me?”

“No, Valentine.”

“There is no Valentine, if Silvia has forsworn and renounced me. What is your news?”

Launce said, “Sir, there is a proclamation that you are vanished.”

Launce frequently misused words. Instead of “vanished,” he meant “banished.”

Someone hearing Launce and the others talk might think that being sentenced to death would be worse than being banished, although Valentine thought that banishment from Silvia would result in his death.

Proteus said, “That you are banished — oh, that’s the news! You have been banished from here, from Silvia, and from me, your friend.”

“Oh, I have fed upon this woe already,” Valentine said, “and now excess of it will make me become ill from overeating. Does Silvia know that I am banished?”

“Yes, yes,” Proteus said, “and she has tried to get her father’s judgment on you reversed. Unless it is reversed, it shall be carried out in full. To her father she has offered a sea of melting pearl, which some call tears. She tendered those pearls at her father’s churlish feet. Along with her tears, she offered, upon her knees, her humble self. She wrung her hands, whose whiteness so suited them as if just now they grew pale for woe. But neither bended knees, pure hands held up, sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears could penetrate her uncompassionate father.

“His judgment is that Valentine, if he is captured, must die. Besides, her intercession on your behalf enraged him so, when she was a suppliant to him for your banishment to be repealed, that he commanded that she be held prisoner in a private cell and he made many bitter threats that she would remain there.”

“Say nothing more, unless the next word that you speak will have some malignant power upon my life and kill me,” Valentine said. “If that word does have that power, then I beg you to breathe it in my ear; let it be the funeral anthem of my endless pain.”

“Cease to lament for that you cannot help,” Proteus advised, “and think about help for that which you lament. Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.

“If you stay here, you cannot see your loved one. Besides, your staying will shorten your life. Hope is a lover’s staff; walk away from here with that and wield hope against despairing thoughts.

“Your letters may be here, even though you are away from here. You can write to Silvia and send the letters to me, and I shall deliver them to the milky-white bosom of your love.

“We lack time for further discussion. Come, I’ll take you through the city-gate; and, before I part with you, we will talk fully of all that may concern your love affairs.

“As you love Silvia, though you may not be concerned about safety for yourself, think about the danger you are in, and come along with me!”

Valentine requested, “Please, Launce, if you see my page, Speed, tell him to make haste and meet me at the North Gate.”

“Go, sirrah, and find him,” Proteus ordered. “Come, Valentine.”

“Oh, my dear Silvia! I am unlucky, unfortunate Valentine!”

Valentine and Proteus exited.

Alone, Launce said to himself, “I am only a fool, you see, and yet I have the wit to think that my master is a kind of a knave, but that’s all one, if he is only one knave. He is a single knave, but if he were to use guile to marry a woman whom his best friend wanted to marry, that would make him more than a single knave.”

Launce believed that what is in one’s heart is important, but it is not as important as what one actually does. Proteus wanted in his heart to be disloyal to Julia and Valentine and to marry Silvia, but that is not as evil as would be actually marrying Silvia. Launce might believe that having in one’s heart the desire to commit rape is evil, but that is not as evil as would be actually committing rape.

Launce continued, “No man lives now who knows that I am in love, yet I am in love, but a team of horses shall not pluck that from me, nor whom it is I love, and yet it is a woman, but what woman she is, I will not tell myself, and yet she is a milkmaid, yet she is not a maid [aka maiden], for she has had older women as godmothers to her progeny, yet she is a maid, because she is her master’s maid and serves for wages.”

On a farm, one animal can service — have sex with — another animal. If Launce’s girlfriend provided that kind of service for wages, she was a prostitute.

Launce added, “She has more qualities than a water-spaniel, which is much in a bare Christian.”

“Qualities” are accomplishments. Water-spaniels are submissive dogs, and men in this society wanted their wives to be submissive, and so this was a positive point for Launce’s girlfriend. Water-spaniels were supposed to be fonder of their master the more their master beat them.

The word “bare” meant “mere.” According to Launce, his girlfriend was a mere Christian.

Launce pulled out a paper and said, “Here is the cate-log of her condition.”

In this society, a “cate” was a delicacy, and a “Kate” could be a whore. Some Kates were cates.

He read, “Imprimis: She can fetch and carry.”

He commented, “Why, a horse can do no more — no, a horse cannot fetch, but only carry; therefore, she is better than a jade.”

A jade is a worthless horse — or a worthless woman.

He read, "Item: She can milk."

He commented, "You can see that this is a sweet virtue in a maid with clean hands."

The sentence "She can milk" could refer to milking a cow — or a penis.

Speed walked over to Launce and said, "How are you now, Signior Launce! What is the news about your mastership?"

"About my master's ship?" Launce replied. "Why, it is at sea."

"Well, this is your old vice still," Speed said. "You mistake — misinterpret — the word. What news, then, is in the paper that you have in your hands?"

"The blackest news that ever you heard."

"Why, man, how black?"

"Why, as black as ink."

"Let me read the news that is in your paper," Speed said.

"That is likely, you blockhead! You cannot read."

"You lie; I can."

"I will test you," Launce said. "Tell me this: Who begot you?"

"Indeed, the son of my grandfather."

"Oh, you illiterate and lazy loiterer!" Launce said. "It was the son of your grandmother."

In the days before DNA testing, only a mother knew whether her son was legitimate. According to Launce, a literate man should have read that.

Launce added, "Your answer proves that you cannot read."

"Come, fool, come; test my literacy with your paper."

Launce handed Speed the paper and said, "There; and may St. Nicholas be your speed! Let him be your aid!"

St. Nicholas was the patron saint of scholars, especially young scholars.

Speed read, "*Imprimis: She can milk.*"

Launce commented, "Yes, that she can."

Speed read, "Item: *She brews good ale.*"

Launce commented, "And thereof comes this proverb: 'Blessing of your heart, you brew good ale.'"

Speed read, "Item: *She can sew.*"

Launce commented, "That's as much as to say, Can she so?"

Speed read, "Item: *She can knit.*"

Launce commented, “What need a man care for a stock, aka dowry, with a wench, when she can knit him a stock, aka stocking?”

Speed read, “*Item: She can wash and scour.*”

Launce commented, “That is a special virtue because then she herself need not be washed and scoured.”

Speed read, “*Item: She can spin.*”

Launce commented, “Then may I set the world on wheels, when she can spin for her living.”

Anyone who is able to set the world on wheels leads an easy and comfortable life.

Speed read, “*Item: She has many nameless virtues.*”

A nameless virtue is a virtue of such great worth that it cannot be named — or a virtue of such smallness that it need not be named.

Launce commented, “Nameless virtues are virtues without names. That’s as much as to say, bastard virtues; they, indeed, know not their fathers and therefore have no names.”

Speed read, “*Here follow her vices.*”

Launce added, “Close at the heels of her virtues.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is not to be kissed fasting in respect of her breath.*”

In other words, her morning breath was so bad that it was not a good idea to kiss her first thing in the morning.

Launce commented, “Well, that fault may be mended with a breakfast. Once she breaks her fast, her breath does not smell so bad because she has washed her mouth with food. Read on.”

Speed read, “*Item: She has a sweet mouth.*”

A sweet mouth could mean a sweet tooth, or it could mean a pretty mouth, or it could mean a lascivious mouth.

Launce commented, “That makes amends for her sour breath.”

Speed read, “*Item: She talks in her sleep.*”

Launce commented, “That does not matter as long as she does not sleep in her talk.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is slow in words.*”

Launce commented, “Oh, a villain set this down among her vices! To be slow in words is a woman’s only virtue. Please, take it out of the list of vices and place it first among her virtues.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is proud.*”

Launce commented, “Take that out, too. Pride is the legacy of Eve in the Garden of Eden myth; pride cannot be taken from this or any woman.”

Speed read, “*Item: She has no teeth.*”

Launce commented, “I don’t mind that because I love to eat crusts.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is curst.*”

A curst woman was a shrew and/or a dangerous woman.

Launce commented, “Well, the best thing about that is, she has no teeth to bite.”

Speed read, “*Item: She will often praise her liquor.*”

Launce commented, “If her liquor is good, she shall praise it. If she will not, I will because good things should be appraised and praised.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is too liberal.*”

In this society, the word “liberal” meant either “generous” or “lascivious.”

Launce commented, “She cannot be liberal with her tongue because it is written down that she is slow of word. She shall not be liberal with her purse because I’ll keep that shut. Now, of another thing she may be liberal — that thing between her legs — and that I cannot help. Well, proceed.”

Speed read, “*Item: She has more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults.*”

Launce said, “Stop there. I’ll have her. She was mine, and not mine, twice or thrice in that last item. Read that once more.”

Speed read, “*Item: She has more hair than wit —*”

Launce said, “More hair than wit? That may be the truth — yes, it is the truth, and I’ll prove it. The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt; the hair that covers the wit is more than the wit because the greater hides the less.”

Launce was using this proverb: “The greater hides the less.” Salt cellars — now we may call the modern version salt shakers — of the time were much larger than they are now. Imagine a plate on which salt has been poured, and then imagine that plate has been covered with a large lid. The lid is big enough to cover the salt and so it is greater than the salt.

The word “salt” also had the meaning of “wit,” aka intelligence. Hair covers the head, and so hair covers the wit and so Launce’s girlfriend has more hair than she has wit. A bald person tends to be an aged person with experience, and so a bald person tends to have more wit than hair. A young person without experience tends to have a full head of hair. In Launce’s society, men were considered to be of more value — and have more intelligence — than females.

Another meaning of the word “salt” was “lechery.” A salty wit is a lascivious wit, and it may be worth pointing out that pubic hair covers the center of female lasciviousness.

Launce asked, “What’s next?”

Speed read, “*Item: — and she has more faults than hairs —*”

Launce commented, “That’s monstrous. Oh, I wish that that were off the list of vices!”

Speed read, “*— and she has more wealth than faults.*”

Launce commented, “Why, that word — ‘wealth’ — makes the faults gracious. The more faults, the more wealth. Well, I’ll have her — I wish to marry her — and if it be a match, as nothing is impossible —”

This is the whole proverb: “Nothing is impossible to a willing heart.”

Speed asked, “What then?”

He meant what is the rest of what you were going to say?

Launce replied, “Why, then, I will tell you — that your master is waiting for you at the North Gate.”

“For me?” Speed asked.

“For you!” Launce exclaimed. “Yes, who are you? He has waited for a better man than you.”

“And must I go to him?”

“You must run to him, for you have stayed so long that merely going — walking — will scarcely serve the purpose.”

“Why didn’t you tell me sooner?” Speed complained. “A pox on your love letters!”

Speed exited.

Launce said to himself, “Now he will be beaten for reading my letter instead of going to Valentine. Speed is an unmannerly slave who insists on thrusting himself into secrets! I’ll follow him so I can see and enjoy the young page’s punishment.”

### — 3.2 —

The Duke of Milan and Thurio were speaking to each other in a room of the Duke’s palace.

The Duke of Milan said, “Sir Thurio, don’t be afraid that she will not love you now Valentine has been banished from her sight.”

“Since his exile, she has despised me most, forsworn my company and ranted at me, and now I despair of ever getting her as my wife,” Thurio said.

“This weak imprint of love that she has for Valentine is like a figure carved in ice, which with an hour’s heat melts to water and loses its form,” the Duke of Milan said. “A little time will melt her frozen thoughts and worthless Valentine shall be forgotten.”

Proteus entered the room and the Duke of Milan said to him, “How are you now, Sir Proteus! Has your countryman, Valentine, gone from our territory in accordance with our proclamation?”

“He has gone, my good lord.”

“My daughter takes his going sorrowfully.”

“A little time, my lord, will kill that grief,” Proteus said.

“So I believe,” the Duke of Milan said, “but Thurio thinks that is not true. Proteus, the good opinion I hold of you — for you have shown some signs that you have great merit — makes

me the readier to confer with you.”

“Longer than I prove loyal to your grace, let me not live to look upon your grace,” Proteus said. “If I should ever prove to be disloyal to you, have me killed.”

“You know how willingly I want to make a marriage match between Sir Thurio and my daughter,” the Duke of Milan said.

“I do, my lord,” Proteus replied.

“And also, I think, you are not ignorant about how she opposes herself against my will.”

“She did, my lord, when Valentine was here.”

“Yes, and perversely she perseveres,” the Duke of Milan said. “What might we do to make the girl forget her love of Valentine and make her love Sir Thurio?”

“The best way is to slander Valentine by saying that he is guilty of falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent,” Proteus said. “These are three things that women highly hate.”

“Yes, but she’ll think that it is spoken out of hatred and is false,” the Duke of Milan said.

“Yes, it would be — if Valentine’s enemy were to deliver it. Therefore, it must with the addition of circumstantial ‘evidence’ be spoken by one whom she believes to be Valentine’s friend.”

“Then you must undertake to slander him,” the Duke of Milan said.

“And that, my lord, I shall be loath to do,” Proteus replied. “It is an evil office for a gentleman, especially when done against his true friend.”

“Where your good word cannot advantage him, your slander can never damage him,” the Duke of Milan said. “Therefore, the act of slander is neither good nor bad, since I, your friend, am entreating you to do it.”

The Duke of Milan was every bit as devious as Proteus.

“You have prevailed, my lord,” Proteus said. “If I can do it with whatever I can speak in his dispraise, she shall not long continue to love him. But say this slander weeds and removes her love from Valentine, it does not necessarily follow that she will love Sir Thurio.”

Thurio said, “Therefore, as you unwind her love from him, lest it should become tangled and be good to no one, you must work to wind her love on me. This must be done by praising my worth as much as you dispraise Sir Valentine’s worth.”

“And, Proteus, we dare trust you in this matter because we know, on Valentine’s report, that you are already Love’s firm disciple,” the Duke of Milan said. “You love Julia, and you cannot soon revolt and change your mind. Because of your love for a woman who is not my daughter, you shall have access to Silvia so that you and she can talk at length because she is dull, heavy, and melancholy, and, for your friend Valentine’s sake, she will be glad to speak to you. You can use this opportunity to mold her by your persuasion to hate young Valentine and to love my friend Thurio.”

“As much as I can do, I will do,” Proteus said. “But you, Sir Thurio, are not sharp and keen and ardent enough. You must lay a trap to entangle her desires by using plaintive songs, whose elaborately constructed rhymes should be jam-packed with your vows to serve her.”

“Yes,” the Duke of Milan said. “Strong is the force of Heaven-inspired poetry.”

Proteus said to Thurio, “Say that upon the altar of her beauty you sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart. Write until your ink is dry, and with your tears moisten it again, and fashion some feeling line that may reveal your undivided devotion.

“Remember that Orpheus’ lute was strung with the sinews of poets, and Orpheus’ golden touch on the strings could soften steel and stones, make tigers tame, and make huge leviathans — whales — forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

“After your deeply sorrowful love songs, visit by night your lady’s chamber-window with some sweet musicians; to their instruments tune a mournful melody. The night’s dead silence will well become such sweetly complaining love pains.

“This, or else nothing, will gain her for you.”

The Duke of Milan said to Proteus, “This advice shows that you have been in love.”

Thurio added, “And your advice I’ll put into effect tonight. Therefore, sweet Proteus, my instructions-giver, let us go into the city immediately to find some gentlemen who are well skilled in music.

“I have a song that will serve the purpose of beginning to put into effect your good advice.”

“Go about it, gentlemen!” the Duke of Milan said. “Get started!”

Proteus said, “We’ll wait upon your grace until after supper, and afterward we will determine how to proceed.”

“Don’t wait!” the Duke of Milan said. “Get started now! I will pardon you from having to wait upon me.”

## CHAPTER 4

— 4.1 —

Some outlaws were talking together in a forest.

The first outlaw said, “Fellows, stand fast; I see a traveler.”

“If there are ten travelers, do not shrink and be afraid, but down with them,” the second outlaw said.

Valentine and Speed approached the outlaws.

The third outlaw said, “Stand — stop — sir, and throw us that which you have about you. If you don’t, we’ll make you sit down and we will search and rob you.”

Speed said to Valentine, “Sir, we are undone and ruined; these are the villains whom all the travellers fear so much.”

Valentine began, “My friends —”

“That’s not so, sir,” the first outlaw said. “We are your enemies.”

The second outlaw said, “Quiet! Peace! Let’s hear what he has to say.”

“Yes, by my beard,” the third outlaw said, “we will because he’s a handsome man.”

Valentine said, “Then know that I have little wealth to lose. I am a man who is thwarted by adversity. My riches are these poor pieces of clothing, of which if you should here strip and dispossess me, you take the sum and substance of what I own.”

The second outlaw asked Valentine, “Where are you traveling?”

“To Verona.”

“From where have you come?” the first outlaw asked.

“From Milan.”

“Have you lived there long?” the third outlaw asked.

“Some sixteen months, and I might have stayed longer, if devious fortune had not thwarted me,” Valentine replied.

“Were you banished from Milan?” the first outlaw asked.

“I was.”

The second outlaw asked, “For what offence?”

Valentine decided to lie. He did not want to say that he loved Silvia and had tried to elope with her — that might damage her reputation. Also, he wanted to say something that might impress the outlaws, and a failed elopement was unlikely to do that.

Valentine said, "I was banished for an offense which now torments me to relate. I killed a man, whose death I much repent, but yet I slew him manfully in a fight without an unfair advantage or base and dishonorable treachery."

"Why, don't repent it, if it were done in that manner," the first outlaw said. "But were you really banished for so small a fault?"

"I was," Valentine said, "and I am happy that I was given such a sentence. Being banished is better than being executed."

"Do you know foreign languages?" the second outlaw asked.

"My youthful travel and travail — hard study — therein made me happy and fluent," Valentine said, "or else I often had been miserable."

"By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar, Friar Tuck, this fellow could be a King for our wild band!" the third outlaw said.

"We'll make him our King," the first outlaw said.

He said to the other outlaws, "Sirs, a word."

The outlaws withdrew and talked.

Speed said to Valentine, "Master, be an outlaw along with them; it's an honorable kind of thievery."

"Peace, servant!" Valentine said. "Quiet!"

The second outlaw asked Valentine, "Tell us this: Have you any resources to fall back on?"

"Nothing but my fortune — whatever fate or destiny has in store for me."

The third outlaw said, "Know, then, that some of us are gentlemen, such as the fury of ungoverned youth has thrust from the company of lawful men. I myself was banished from Verona for plotting to steal away with a lady who was an heir and closely related to the Duke of Verona."

The second outlaw said, "And I was banished from Mantua because in my anger I stabbed a gentleman in the heart."

The first outlaw said, "And I was banished for similar petty crimes as these, but let's get to the point. We cite our crimes so that they may excuse our lawless lives. And partly, seeing that you are beautified with a good shape and by your own report are a linguist and a man of such perfection as we do much want in our band—"

"—indeed, because you are a banished man," the second outlaw said. "For that reason, above all the other reasons, we will discuss terms with you. Are you willing to become our general? Are you willing to make a virtue of necessity and live, as we do, in this wilderness?"

"What do you say?" the third outlaw said. "Will you be one of our band of outlaws? Say yes, and you will be the Captain of us all. We'll do you homage and be ruled by you, and we will love you as our commander and our King."

"But if you scorn our courtesy and our offer, you die," the first outlaw said.

“You shall not live to brag about what we have offered you,” the second outlaw said.

Valentine replied, “I accept your offer and will live with you, provided that you do no outrages on helpless women or poor travelers.”

“No, we detest such vile and base and dishonorable practices,” the third outlaw said. “Come, go with us, we’ll bring you to our crews and show you all the treasure we have got, which, along with ourselves, all rest at your disposal.”

— 4.2 —

Outside the Duke of Milan’s palace, under the upper-story window of Silvia’s chamber, Proteus stood.

He said to himself, “Already I have been traitorous to Valentine and now I must be as unjust to Thurio. Under the pretext of commending and praising him, I have access to Silvia and can promote my own love for her.

“But Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy and virtuous, to be corrupted with my worthless gifts. When I protest true loyalty to her, she twits me with my falsehood to my friend Valentine. When to her beauty I commend my vows, she orders me to think about how I have broken my word by breaking faith with Julia, whom I loved.

“And notwithstanding all her sharp sarcastic insults, the least of which would quell a lover’s hope, yet I am like a spaniel — the more she spurns my love, the more my love grows and the more I fawn on her still.

“But here comes Thurio. Now we must go to her window, and play some evening music to her ears.”

Thurio arrived with some musicians.

“How are you now, Sir Proteus?” Thurio asked. “Have you crept before us?”

Thurio was suspicious about Proteus’ presence under Silvia’s tower.

“Yes, nobly born Thurio,” Proteus replied, “for you know that love will creep in service where it cannot walk upright.”

“Yes, but I hope, sir, that you love no one here.”

“Sir, I do,” Proteus said. “If I did not, I would be elsewhere.”

“Who do you love? Silvia?”

“Yes, Silvia — for your sake,” Proteus replied.

“I thank you for your own sake,” Thurio said. “Now, gentlemen, let’s play and go to it heartily for awhile.”

At a distance, the host of a local inn arrived. With him was Julia, who was disguised in the clothing of a young page and who called herself Sebastian. They were close enough to hear what Proteus and the others said.

The Host said, “Now, my young guest, I think you’re allycholly. Please, tell me why.”

“My Host, I am melancholy because I cannot be merry,” the disguised Julia said.

This was a variation of the proverb “I am sad because I cannot be glad.”

The Host said, “Come, we’ll have you merry. I’ll bring you where you shall hear music and see the gentleman whom you asked for.”

“But shall I hear him speak?” the disguised Julia asked.

“Yes, that you shall.”

“That will be music,” the disguised Julia replied.

Music played.

The Host said, “Listen! Listen!”

“Is he among these people?” the disguised Julia asked.

“Yes, but be quiet! Let’s hear them.”

Proteus played the lute and sang these lyrics:

*“Who is Silvia? What is she,*

*“That all our lovers praise her?*

*“Holy, fair, and wise is she;*

*“The Heaven such grace did lend her,*

*“So that she might admired be.*

*“Is she as kind and gracious as she is fair?*

*“For beauty lives with kindness.*

*“Love does to her eyes hasten,*

*“To help him with his blindness,*

*“And, being helped, lives there.*

*“Then to Silvia let us sing,*

*“That Silvia is excelling;*

*“She excels each mortal thing*

*“Upon the dull Earth dwelling.*

*“To her let us garlands bring.”*

Julia was dejected because Proteus, the man she loved, was singing a love song to another woman.

The Host said, “What’s going on! Are you more downcast than you were before? How are you, man? The music likes you not.”

By “likes,” the Host meant “pleases.”

The disguised Julia replied, “You are mistaken; the musician likes me not.”

“Why, my pretty youth?”

In this society, one of the meanings of the word “father” was a title of respect for an old man.

“He plays false, father,” the disguised Julia said.

By “playing false,” Julia meant that Proteus was not being faithful to her.

“How? Are the strings out of tune?”

“They are not, but yet they are so false that he grieves my very heartstrings.”

Proteus’ heartstrings were out of tune; they should have been in tune with Julia’s heartstrings.

“You have a quick ear,” the Host said.

“Yes, but I wish I were deaf,” the disguised Julia said. “My quick ear makes me have a gloomy, dejected heart.”

“I see that you don’t take delight in music.”

“Not a whit, when it jars so.”

To “jar” meant “to sound discordant” and “to hurt.”

The Host said, “Listen, what fine change is in the music!”

The “change” the Host meant was modulation and variation.

The disguised Julia replied, “Yes, that change is the annoying spite.”

The “change” she meant was the change in Proteus’ heart.

The Host asked, “Would you have them always play only one thing?”

“I would always have one play only one thing,” the disguised Julia replied.

She meant that Proteus should desire only one woman — Julia — and be faithful to her.

She added, “But, Host, does this Sir Proteus whom we are talking about often pay attention to this gentlewoman?”

“I will tell you what Launce, his man-servant, told me,” the Host replied. “Launce told me that Sir Proteus loves her beyond all reckoning.”

“Where is Launce?”

“Gone to seek his dog,” the Host replied. “Tomorrow, by his master’s command, Launce must take his dog so it can be given as a present to Proteus’ lady.”

“Peace! Quiet!” the disguised Julia said. “Stand to one side. The company departs.”

Proteus said, “Sir Thurio, do not fear. I will so plead to Silvia that you shall say my cunning scheme excels.”

“Where shall we meet?” Thurio asked.

“At Saint Gregory’s well,” Proteus replied.

“Farewell,” Thurio said.

Thurio and the musicians exited.

Silvia appeared at the window of her chamber and looked down on Proteus.

“Madam, good evening to your ladyship,” Proteus said.

“I thank you for your music, gentlemen,” Silvia said. Her eyes had not adjusted to the darkness and she did not know that the musicians had departed.

She asked, “Who is that man who spoke?”

“I am a man, who, if you knew his pure heart’s truth, you would quickly learn to know him by his voice.”

“Sir Proteus, as I take it,” Silvia said.

“I am Sir Proteus, gentle lady, and I am your servant.”

“What’s your will?” Silvia asked. “What do you want?”

“I want to obtain your will,” Proteus said.

“Will” meant “wish.” It also meant “sexual desire.”

“You have your wish,” Silvia said. “This is my will: I wish for you to immediately hurry off home to bed. You are a treacherously cunning, perjured, false, disloyal man! Do you think that I am so shallow, so dense, and so unintelligent that I will allow myself to be seduced by the flattery of you, who have deceived so many with your vows?”

“Return, return, and make your love — Julia — amends. For me, by this pale queen of night — the Moon, Diana, the virgin goddess of chastity — I swear that I am so far from granting your request that I despise you for your wrongful wooing of me, and by and by I intend to chide myself even for this time that I spend in talking to you.”

“I grant, sweet love, that I did love a lady,” Proteus said, “but she is dead.”

Julia thought, *That is false, even if I — who am now Sebastian, not Julia — should speak it because I am sure she is not buried.*

“Let’s say that she is dead,” Silvia said, “yet Valentine, who is your friend, survives; to whom, as you yourself are witness, I am betrothed. Aren’t you ashamed to wrong Valentine with your persistent wooing of me?”

“I likewise hear that Valentine is dead,” Proteus lied.

“And so suppose I am,” Silvia said, “because you can assure yourself that my love is buried in his grave.”

“Sweet lady, let me rake your love from the earth.”

“Go to your lady’s grave and call her love from thence, or at the least, bury your love in her grave.”

Julia thought, *Proteus did not hear that.*

Proteus said to Silvia, “Madam, if your heart is so obdurate, grant me your picture for my love. Give me the picture that is hanging in your chamber. To that I’ll speak, to that I’ll sigh and weep. Because the substance — the essential part — of your perfect self is elsewhere devoted, I am only a shadow, and to your shadow I will make true love.”

Julia thought, *If the image in the picture were a substance — a solid, real thing — you would, surely, deceive it, and make it only a shadow, as I am. Because of heartbreak and my disguise, I have been changed from my real self — I am only a shadow of my real self.*

“I am very loath to be your idol, sir,” Silvia said, “but since your falsehood shall become you well to worship shadows and adore false shapes, send someone to me in the morning and I’ll send the picture to you, and so, have a good rest.”

Silvia was being insulting to Proteus. She was saying that he was the type of man who ought to love a mere picture and not a real woman.

Proteus replied, “I shall rest as well as wretches do who wait overnight for their execution in the morning.”

Proteus walked away, and Silvia went back into her chamber.

The disguised Julia asked, “Host, are you ready to go?”

“By my Christian faith, I was fast asleep.”

“Please tell me, where is Sir Proteus staying?”

“At my inn,” the Host replied. “Trust me, I think it is almost day.”

“It is not almost day,” the disguised Julia said, “but it has been the longest night that I have stayed awake and the very heaviest.”

The word “heaviest” meant both “darkest” and “most sorrowful.”

— 4.3 —

Very early the next morning, Sir Eglamour stood alone under the window of Silvia’s chamber. He was not the same Eglamour who had been one of Julia’s wooers.

He said to himself, “This is the hour that Madam Silvia entreated me to call and know her mind. There’s some great matter she shall employ me in.”

He called, “Madam! Madam!”

Silvia appeared at her window and asked, “Who is calling me?”

“Your servant and your friend,” Eglamour replied, “one who attends your ladyship’s command.”

“Sir Eglamour, a thousand times good morning,” Silvia said.

“As many, worthy lady, to yourself. In accordance with your ladyship’s command, I am thus early come to know in what service it is your pleasure to command me.”

“Oh, Eglamour, you are a gentleman — don’t think that I am flattering you, for I swear I am not — you are valiant, wise, compassionate, and well accomplished. You are not ignorant what dear good will I bear for the banished Valentine, nor how my father would force me to marry foolish Thurio, whom my very soul abhors. You yourself have loved; and I have heard you say that no grief ever came so near your heart as when your lady — your true love — died, and upon whose grave you vowed pure chastity.

“Sir Eglamour, I want to go to Valentine, to Mantua, where I hear he now lives, and because the roads are dangerous to pass, I desire your worthy company, upon whose faith and honor I rely.

“Don’t tell me that my father will be angry, Eglamour, but instead think about my grief, a lady’s grief, and think about the justness of my flying from here, to keep me from a most unholy match, which Heaven and fortune always reward with plagues.

“I want you, deep from a heart as full of sorrows as the sea is full of sands, to bear me company and go with me. If you will not, I want you to hide and keep secret what I have said to you, so that I may venture to depart alone.”

“Madam, I much pity your distress, which I know has not been caused by any wrongdoing on your part, and so I consent to go along with you, caring as little what befalls me as much as I wish that all good things befall you. When will you go?”

“This evening.”

“Where shall I meet you?”

“At Friar Patrick’s cell, where I intend to make holy confession.”

“I will not fail your ladyship,” Eglamour said. “Good morning, gentle lady.”

“Good morning, kind Sir Eglamour.”

— 4.4 —

Later, but at the same spot, Launce and his dog, Crab, arrived.

Launce said to himself, “When a man’s servant shall play the cur with him, you see, it goes hard. My dog is one that I brought up from when he was a puppy; he is one that I saved from drowning, when three or four of his very young and still-blind brothers and sisters went to their drowning and died.

“I have taught him, even as one would say precisely, ‘Thus I would teach a dog.’ I was sent to deliver him as a present to Mistress Silvia from my master, Proteus, and I came no sooner into the dining-chamber than he steps over to her dinner plate and steals her chicken leg.

“Oh, it is a foul thing when a cur cannot control himself in all kinds of company! I would have, as one should say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be, as it were, a dog at all things.”

“To be a dog at all things” means “to be adept at all things.” This is shown by the words “to be an old dog at something” — an old dog is an experienced dog.

Launce continued, “If I had not had more intelligence than he, to take a fault upon me that he did, I think verily he had been hanged for it; as sure as I live, he would have suffered for it; you shall judge.”

In this society, a dog could be literally hanged to death for committing an offence.

Launce continued, “He thrust himself into the company of three or four gentlemanlike dogs under the Duke of Milan’s table: he had not been there — pardon my French! — a pissing while, aka the time it takes to piss, but everyone in the chamber smelt him. ‘Out with the dog!’ says one. ‘What cur is that?’ says another. ‘Whip him out of the chamber!’ says the third. ‘Hang him!’ says the Duke of Milan.

“I, having been acquainted with the smell before, knew it was Crab, and I went to the fellow who whips the dogs: ‘Friend,’ said I, ‘do you mean to whip the dog?’ ‘Yes, indeed, I do,’ said he. ‘You do him the more wrong,’ said I; ‘it was I who did the thing you know of.’ He makes me no more ado, but whips me out of the chamber. How many masters would do this for his servant?

“I’ll swear that I have sat in the stocks for puddings — sausages — he has stolen; otherwise, he would have been executed. I have stood on the pillory for geese he has killed; otherwise, he would have suffered for it.”

He said to his dog, “You don’t think of this now. No. I remember the trick you served me when I took my leave of Madam Silvia. Didn’t I tell you to always watch me and do as I do? When did you see me heave up my leg and make water — piss — against a gentlewoman’s hooped skirt? Did you ever see me do such a trick?”

Proteus and the disguised Julia walked over to Launce and his dog.

Proteus said to the disguised Julia, “Sebastian is your name? I like you well and will employ you in some service soon.”

“In whatever you please, I’ll do what I can,” the disguised Julia replied.

“I hope you will,” Proteus said.

He then said to Launce, “Here you are, you whoreson peasant! Where have you been loitering these past two days?”

“Indeed, sir, I carried Mistress Silvia the dog you bade me.”

“And what does she says about my little jewel?”

“Indeed, she says your dog was a cur, and tells you that currish and snarling thanks is good enough for such a present.”

“But she accepted my dog?” Proteus asked.

“No, indeed, she did not,” Launce said. “I have brought him back here again.”

Proteus looked at Crab and said, “What! Did you offer her *this* dog as a gift from me?”

“Yes, sir,” Launce said. “The other ‘squirrel’ — a little lapdog — was stolen from me by the hangman boys in the marketplace — someday those boys will hang. So then I offered Silvia my own dog, which is a dog as big as ten of yours, and therefore my dog is the greater gift.”

“Go and find my dog again, or never return again into my sight,” Proteus ordered. “Away, I say! Do you stay here to vex me?”

Launce and Crab exited.

Proteus said, “He is a rascal, who continually does things that shame me! Sebastian, I have hired you, partly because I have need of such a youth who can with some discretion do my business, for it is no use to trust yonder foolish lout with such business, but chiefly I have hired you because of your face and your behavior, which, if my discernment does not deceive me, provide evidence of a good bringing up, fortune, and truth. Therefore, you should know that I am hiring you because of these things.”

He gave the disguised Julia a ring and ordered, “Go immediately and take this ring with you. Deliver it to Madam Silvia. The woman who gave me this ring loved me well.”

Julia had given Proteus the ring.

The disguised Julia said, “It seems that you did not love her, since you are relinquishing her token. She is dead, perhaps?”

“That is not so,” Proteus said. “I think she still lives.”

“It’s a pity!”

“Why did you cry, ‘It’s a pity?’” Proteus asked.

“I cannot choose but to pity her.”

“Why should you pity her?”

“Because I think that she loved you as well as you love your lady Silvia. Your old loved one dreams of a man who has forgotten her love, while you dote on a woman who does not care for your love. It is a pity that love should be so contrary, and thinking of it makes me cry, ‘It’s a pity!’”

“Well, give Silvia that ring and with it this letter. That’s her chamber,” Proteus said, pointing to Silvia’s window. “Tell my lady I want her to fulfill the promise she made to give me her Heavenly picture. Once your message is delivered, hurry home to my chamber, where you shall find me, sad and solitary.”

Proteus exited.

“How many women would deliver such a message?” Julia asked herself. “Alas, poor Proteus! You have hired a fox to be the shepherd of your lambs. Alas, poor fool — poor me! Why do I pity him — Proteus — who with his very heart despises me? Because he loves her, he despises me. Because I love him, I must pity him.

“This is the ring I gave to him when he parted from me, to bind him to remember my good will. And now I, unhappy messenger, am supposed to plead for that which I wish he will not

obtain, to carry that which I would have refused, to praise his faith that I would have dispraised. I am supposed to plead for him to Silvia, whom he loves instead of me.

“I am my master’s true-confirmed love, but I cannot prove to be a true servant to my master, unless I prove to be a false traitor to myself.

“Yet I will woo Silvia for him, but yet I will woo her very coldly because, as Heaven knows, I would not have him succeed.”

Silvia, accompanied by some serving women, including a serving woman named Ursula, appeared outside her tower.

The disguised Julia said, “Gentlewoman, good day! Please, take me to where I may speak with Madam Silvia.”

“What would you want with her, if I were she?” Silvia asked.

“If you are she, I ask for your patience so you can hear me speak the message I am sent to deliver.”

“From whom?” Silvia asked.

“From my master, Sir Proteus, madam,” the disguised Julia replied.

“Oh, he sent you for a picture.”

“Yes, madam.”

“Ursula, give me my picture there,” Silvia asked.

Ursula was a competent servant. Knowing that the picture would be needed, she had it with her and handed it to Silvia.

“Go and give your master this,” Silvia said, giving the portrait to the disguised Julia. “Tell him from me, that one Julia, whom his changing thoughts have forgotten, would better suit his chamber than this portrait — my shadow.”

Julia said, holding out a letter, “Madam, please read this letter—”

Silvia took it, but it was the wrong letter — it was the love letter to Julia from Proteus that Julia had torn up and then pieced back together.

Julia said, “Pardon me, madam; I have thoughtlessly given you a letter that I should not,” and she pulled the letter out of Silvia’s hand.

She held out another letter to Silvia and said, “This is the letter to your ladyship.”

Suspicious, Silvia said, “Please, let me look at that first letter again.”

She had seen the words “*To Julia*” and recognized Proteus’ handwriting.

“It may not be,” the disguised Julia said. “Good madam, pardon me.”

“There! Stop!” Silvia said. “I will not look upon your master’s lines. I know they are stuffed full of protestations of love and full of freshly created oaths, which he will break as easily as I tear up his letter.”

She tore up the letter that Proteus had written to her.

“Madam, he also sends your ladyship this ring,” the disguised Julia said, offering Silvia the ring, which Silvia refused.

Silvia said, “The more shame for him for sending it to me because I have heard him say a thousand times that his Julia gave it to him at his departure. Although his false finger has profaned the ring, my finger shall not do his Julia so much wrong.”

“She thanks you,” the disguised Julia said.

“What did you say?”

“I thank you, madam, that you feel concern for her. Poor gentlewoman! My master wrongs her much.”

“Do you know her?” Silvia asked.

“Almost as well as I know myself. I can say that after thinking upon her woes, I have wept a hundred separate times.”

“Probably, she thinks that Proteus has forsaken her.”

“I think she does, and that’s her cause of sorrow,” the disguised Julia said.

“Is she not surpassingly fair and beautiful?”

“She has been fairer, madam, than she is. When she thought my master loved her well, she, in my opinion, was as fair as you. But since that time, she has neglected her mirror and thrown her Sun-mask away so her face has no protection against the Sun’s beauty-harming rays. The air has starved the roses in her cheeks and pinched the lily-color of her face, so that now she is as black as I am.”

Julia was now tanned, and as part of her disguise she may have used umber, a natural pigment, to darken her complexion. In the culture of Julia and Silvia, a fair — light — complexion was prized and regarded as beautiful.

“How tall was Julia?” Silvia asked.

“About my height,” the disguised Julia replied, “for at Pentecost, when all our pageants of delight were played, our youth got me to play the woman’s part in a play, and I was dressed in Madam Julia’s gown, which fit me as well, by all men’s judgments, as if the garment had been made for me. Therefore, I know she is about my height.

“And at that time I made her weep in earnest because I played a lamenting character part. Madam, it was Ariadne expressing extreme grief because Theseus had falsely promised to always love her. She saved him from King Minos’ Minotaur on Crete, but unjustly, Theseus abandoned her on an island and fled from her.

“I acted so lively with my tears this role that my poor mistress, Julia, moved by my performance, wept bitterly, and I wish I might be dead if I in my thoughts did not feel her true sorrow!”

“She is beholden to you, gentle youth,” Silvia said. “Alas, poor lady, desolate and abandoned! I myself weep when I think upon your words. Here, youth, here is my purse; I give you this for your sweet mistress’ sake, because you love her. Farewell.”

Silvia exited with her serving women.

Alone, Julia said to herself, “And she shall thank you for it, if ever you know her. You are a virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful. I hope my master’s suit will be but cold, since Silvia respects the love of my mistress — Julia, who is myself — so much.

“Alas, how love can trifle with itself!

“Here is Silvia’s picture. Let me see. I think, if I had such a headdress as she is wearing, this face of mine would be every bit as lovely as this face of hers, and yet the painter flattered her a little, unless I flatter myself too much. I may be complimenting myself too much, and I may be encouraging myself with false hopes.

“Her hair is blond, mine is perfect yellow. If that is all the difference in his love and the reason he loves her and not me, I’ll get myself a blond wig. Her eyes are grey as glass, and so are mine. Yes, but her forehead’s low, and mine’s as high.

“What is it that he values in her that I can’t make worthy of being valued in me, if this foolish god Love — Cupid — were not a blinded god?

“Come, shadow — I am a shadow of myself because of grief — come and take this shadow — this portrait of Silvia — because it is your rival. Oh, you insensible form, you portrait, you shall be worshipped, kissed, loved, and adored!

“And, if there were sense in his idolatry, my substance — I am real — should be a statue — something substantial — in the stead of this picture, a mere image.

“I’ll treat you kindly for your mistress’ sake, who treated me kindly, or else I vow by Jove that I should have scratched out your unseeing eyes to make my master fall out of love with you!”

## CHAPTER 5

### — 5.1 —

Sir Eglamour arrived at the abbey in Milan where Friar Patrick had his cell.

He said to himself, “The Sun begins to gild the western sky, and now it is about the very hour that Silvia, at Friar Patrick’s cell, should meet me. She will not fail, for lovers do not miss the hour that they appoint, unless it is to come early — a person who is in love has spurs in his or her sides. I see Silvia coming now.”

Silvia walked over to Eglamour, who said, “Lady, a happy evening!”

“Amen, amen!” Silvia said. “Let’s go, good Eglamour. Let’s go out at the side gate by the abbey wall. I fear I am being followed by some spies.”

“Fear not,” Eglamour said. “The forest is not three leagues away. If we reach the forest, we are safe enough.”

### — 5.2 —

Thurio, Proteus, and the disguised Julia were in a room of the Duke of Milan’s palace.

Thurio asked, “Sir Proteus, what does Silvia say about my proposal to marry her?”

“Oh, sir, I find her milder and gentler than she was, and yet she takes exception to your physical appearance.”

“What? She thinks that my leg is too long?”

“No; that it is too thin,” Proteus replied.

“I’ll wear a riding boot to make it somewhat rounder,” Thurio said.

The disguised Julia thought, *But love will not be spurred to love what it loathes.*

“What does she say about my face?” Thurio asked.

“She says it is a fair one,” Proteus replied.

“Then the willful, capricious lady lies; my face is black.”

“But pearls are fair,” Proteus said, “and the old saying is ‘Black men are pearls in beautiful ladies’ eyes.’”

Julia thought, *The old saying is true, assuming that such pearls are those that put out ladies’ eyes, for I had rather close my eyes than look at a swarthy man.*

The “pearls” Julia meant were eye cataracts.

“How does she like my conversation?” Thurio asked.

“Ill, when you talk about war,” Proteus replied.

“But well, when I discourse of love and peace?” Thurio asked.

Julia thought, *But she likes your conversation better, indeed, when you hold your peace.*

“What does she say about my courage and valor?”

“Oh, sir, she has no doubt concerning your courage and valor,” Proteus replied.

Julia thought, *She need not have any doubt, when she knows that your “courage and valor” are actually cowardice.*

“What does she say about my noble ancestry?”

“That you are well descended.”

Julia thought, *That is true. You have descended from the gentleman who sired you; you are a fool.*

“Does she think about my possessions such as my lands?” Thurio asked.

“Oh, yes, and she pities them.”

“For what reason?”

Julia thought, *That such an ass should own them.*

“That they are leased out,” Proteus said.

Julia said, “Here comes the Duke of Milan.”

The Duke of Milan walked over to them and said, “How are you now, Sir Proteus! How are you now, Thurio! Which of you has seen Sir Eglamour lately?”

“Not I,” Thurio replied.

“Nor I,” Proteus replied.

“Have you seen my daughter, Silvia?” the Duke of Milan asked.

“I haven’t seen her either,” Proteus replied.

“Why then, she’s fled to that base peasant Valentine, and Eglamour is in her company,” the Duke of Milan said. “It is true; Friar Laurence met them both as he in penance wandered through the forest. He recognized Eglamour, and he guessed that my daughter accompanied him, but since she was wearing a mask to protect her face from the Sun, he was not sure of it. Besides, Silvia intended to make her confession at Friar Patrick’s cell this afternoon; and she did not show up. These things confirm her flight from here.

“Therefore, please, don’t stand here and talk, but mount your horses immediately and meet me on the upward slope of the foot of the mountain that leads towards Mantua, where they are fled.

“Hurry, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.”

The Duke of Milan exited.

“Why, this is what it is to be a peevish, obstinate girl,” Thurio said, “who flies her fortune — my proposal to marry her — when it follows her. I’ll go after her, more to be revenged on

Eglamour than for the love of uncaring and inconsiderate Silvia.”

Thurio exited.

“And I will go after her, more for love of Silvia than hatred of Eglamour, who goes with her,” Proteus said.

Proteus exited.

“And I will go after her, more to thwart Proteus’ love than out of hatred for Silvia, who has fled because of love,” Julia said.

The disguised Julia exited.

— 5.3 —

In the forest, the outlaws had captured Silvia.

The first outlaw said to her, “Come, come, be patient and calm; we must bring you to our Captain.”

“A thousand greater misfortunes than this one have taught me how to endure this patiently,” Silvia said.

“Come, bring her away,” the second outlaw said.

“Where is the gentleman who was with her?” the first outlaw asked.

“Being nimble-footed, he has outrun us,” the third outlaw replied. “But Moyses and Valerius are following him. Go with this woman to the west end of the wood, where our Captain is. We’ll follow the gentleman who fled. The thicket is surrounded; he cannot escape us.”

The first outlaw said to Silvia, “Come, I must bring you to our Captain’s cave. Don’t be afraid. He has an honorable mind, and he will not treat a woman lawlessly.”

Silvia cried, “Oh, Valentine, I endure this for you!”

— 5.4 —

Alone, Valentine said to himself, “How custom breeds a habit in a man! I endure this shadowy, deserted, and unfrequented woods better than flourishing peopled towns: Here I can sit alone, unseen by anyone, and to the nightingale’s complaining notes tune my distresses and sing my woes.”

He then said to his heart, which he had figuratively left with his beloved, Silvia, in Milan: “Oh, you who inhabit my breast, do not leave the mansion tenantless so long, lest, growing ruinous, the building fall and leave no memory of what it was!”

He then said, “Revive me with your presence, Silvia. You gentle nymph, cherish your forlorn swain!”

He heard noises and said, “What hallooing and stir is this today? These are my mates, outlaws who make their wills their law and do whatever they want. They are chasing some unfortunate traveler. These outlaws much respect me, yet I have much to do to keep them from committing uncivilized outrages.”

He saw some people and said to himself, "Withdraw, Valentine, and hide. Who are these people coming here?"

Proteus, Silvia, and Julia arrived; they did not see Valentine.

Proteus said to Silvia, "Madam, in return for this service I have done for you, although you do not value anything your servant does — I have risked my life and rescued you from him who would have forced your honor and your love; he would have raped you — grant me, as my reward, just one gentle look. A smaller boon than this I cannot beg and less than this, I am sure, you cannot give."

Proteus may have been overvaluing the service, if any, that he had done for Silvia when he claimed that the first outlaw had tried to rape her — the first outlaw may not have tried to rape her. Silvia was certainly now more concerned about Proteus than she was about the first outlaw.

Valentine thought, *How like a dream is this that I see and hear! Love, lend me patience to be patient for a while.*

Silvia said, "Oh, I am miserable and unhappy!"

"Unhappy were you, madam, before I came," Proteus said, "but by my coming I have made you happy."

"By your approaches — your amorous advances — you make me most unhappy," Silvia said.

Julia thought, *And he makes me most unhappy, when he approaches — makes amorous advances — to your presence.*

Silvia said, "Had I been seized by a hungry lion, I would have preferred to have been a breakfast to the beast, rather than have false and disloyal Proteus rescue me. Oh, Heaven be the judge how I love Valentine, whose life's as precious to me as my soul! And just as much, for more there cannot be, I detest false perjured Proteus. Therefore be gone; chase after me no more."

"What dangerous action, even if it stood next to death, would I not undergo for one gentle look from you!" Proteus said. "Oh, it is the curse in love, and continually proven to be a curse, when women cannot love who loves them!"

"It is the curse in love when Proteus cannot love where he's beloved," Silvia replied. "Read over Julia's heart, your first and best love, for whose dear sake you made a thousand oaths to be faithful, and then you perjured all those oaths in order to love me. You loved Julia and promised to faithfully love her, but then you tore up your faith into a thousand oaths, and you perjured all those oaths, in order to love me."

"You have no faith left now, unless you are able to be faithful to two women, and that's far worse than having no faith; it is better to have no faith than to have a plural faith which is too much by one, you counterfeit friend — false and imitation friend! — to your true friend, Valentine!"

Proteus replied, "A person who is in love no longer pays attention to friendship. When in love, who respects a friend?"

Silvia answered, "All men except Proteus."

"If the gentle spirit of moving words can in no way change you to a milder form, I'll woo you like a soldier, at the point of a sword — or at the tip of my penis — and love you against the nature of love. I'll force you to submit to me."

"Oh, Heaven!" Silvia cried.

Grabbing Silvia's arm, Proteus said, "I'll force you to yield to my desire — I'll rape you!"

Valentine came out of hiding and said, "Ruffian, let go that rude, uncivilized touch, you wicked 'friend'!"

"Valentine!" Proteus said.

"You commonplace friend, who is without faith or love, for such is a friend now, in these times, treacherous man!" Valentine said. "You have deceived my hopes; nothing but my own eyes could have persuaded me that you are a false friend. Now I dare not say that I have one friend alive; you would disprove me. Who should be trusted, when one's own right hand is perjured and untrue to the bosom? Proteus, you were like my right hand to me, but now I am sorry I must never trust you any more. Because of you, I must regard all men in the world as strangers, not as friends. The wound given by an intimate friend is deepest. Oh, these times are most accursed because my friend is the worst among all my foes!"

Proteus instantly repented.

"My shame and guilt overcome me," Proteus said. "Forgive me, Valentine. If hearty sorrow is a sufficient ransom for offence, I offer it here. I do as truly suffer as ever I did sin."

"Then I am paid; I have received the ransom," Valentine said. "And once again I regard you as honest. Whoever is not satisfied by repentance is neither of Heaven nor of Earth, for repentance pleases both of these. The wrath of Eternal God is appeased by repentance."

What Valentine had said about God's forgiveness was theologically correct. A person could be evil all or most of his entire life, but if that person truly repents his sins with his final breath, or earlier, God will forgive that person and that person will have a place in Paradise.

Valentine had forgiven Proteus because Proteus had repented. Valentine now provided a model for Proteus to follow if Proteus had truly repented. A good person is not a selfish person. A good person does not regard himself as the center of the universe. A good person will not blindly follow and satisfy his desires.

Valentine said to Proteus, "And, so that my friendship may appear plain and generous, all that was mine in Silvia I give to you."

Silvia stayed silent. Either she was shocked, or she trusted Valentine enough to wait and see what he was up to.

What was Valentine up to? He wanted Proteus to follow his model and give up Silvia, thereby allowing Valentine to claim her. Proteus' quick repentance was some evidence that Proteus would follow Valentine's model.

Proteus did not immediately answer because the disguised Julia cried, "Oh, unhappy me!" Then she fainted.

Referring to the disguised Julia, Proteus said, “Look after the boy.”

“Why, boy!” Valentine said, crouching by the disguised Julia, who was reviving. “Why, lad! How are you now! What’s the matter? Look up. Speak.”

The disguised Julia said, “Oh, good sir, my master ordered me to deliver a ring to Madam Silvia, which, out of my neglect, was never done.”

Of course, Julia had tried to deliver the ring, which Silvia had refused, but Julia wanted now to reveal her identity, using the rings that Proteus and she had exchanged when he departed from Verona.

“Where is that ring, boy?” Proteus asked.

“Here it is,” the disguised Julia said. “This is it.”

She deliberately handed him the wrong ring. Proteus had ordered her to deliver to Silvia the ring that Julia had given to him. Silvia had refused to accept the ring. Now Julia handed Proteus the ring that he had given to her, Julia, when he departed from her in Verona.

“What!” Proteus said. “Let me see that ring! Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.”

“Oh, I beg your mercy, sir,” the disguised Julia said. “I made a mistake.”

She held up the other ring and said, “This is the ring you sent to Silvia.”

“But how did you come to have this first ring? At my departure from Verona, I gave this ring to Julia.”

“And Julia herself gave it to me,” the disguised Julia said, “and Julia herself has brought it here.”

“What!” Proteus said. “You are Julia!”

“Behold her who was the target for all your oaths of fidelity, and who received them deep in her heart,” Julia said. “How often have you with your perjured oaths of faithfulness split the bottom of my heart!

“Oh, Proteus, let this page’s clothing I am wearing make you blush! Be ashamed that I have taken upon myself to wear such immodest clothing, if you — a false lover — can feel shame.

“It is the lesser blot, modesty finds, for women to change their shapes than men their minds. It is a lesser sin for women to disguise themselves than for men to be unfaithful.”

Proteus finally grew up. He followed Valentine’s model of rejecting selfishness. He also followed Julia’s model of being true and faithful.

“Than men their minds!” Proteus said. “It is true. Oh, Heaven! If a man is true and faithful, that man is perfect. That one error — unfaithfulness — fills a man with faults; that one error makes a man run through and commit all the remaining sins. When a man is true, unfaithful passions drop away before they even begin.”

Proteus made his decision. He chose Julia, who loved him, instead of Silvia, who loved Valentine.

Proteus said, "There is nothing in Silvia's face that I cannot see to be fresher in Julia's face when I look at Julia with a constant and faithful and loving eye."

"Come, come, Proteus and Julia, hold hands," Valentine said. "Let me be blest to make this happy union between you two. It is a pity that two such lovers were for so long foes."

Holding Julia's hand, Proteus looked into her eyes and said, "Bear witness, Heaven, I have my wish forever."

"And I have mine," Julia replied.

Silvia felt relieved.

The outlaws now entered the scene. They had taken the Duke of Milan and Thurio captive.

The outlaws shouted, "A prize! A prize! A prize!"

"Stop! Stop, I say!" Valentine ordered the outlaws. "It is my lord the Duke of Milan."

He said to the Duke, "A disgraced man bids your grace welcome. I am banished Valentine."

"Sir Valentine!" the Duke said.

Thurio said, "Yonder is Silvia, and Silvia's mine." He stepped forward.

Valentine drew his sword and said, "Thurio, step back, or else embrace your death. Do not come within the striking distance of my wrath. Do not say that Silvia is yours. If you say it once again, not all the soldiers in Verona will be able to guard you and keep you safe. Here Silvia stands; if you are thinking of touching her, let me tell you that I dare you to even breathe upon my love."

Silvia felt further relieved.

Thurio replied, "Sir Valentine, I don't care for her. I regard as a fool a man who will endanger his body for a girl who does not love him. I don't claim her, and therefore she is yours."

Valentine sheathed his sword.

The Duke of Milan said, "The more degenerate and dishonorable are you, Thurio, to make such efforts for her as you have done and leave her for such a slight reason — you simply don't want to fight for her.

"Now, by the honor of my ancestry, I applaud your spirit, Valentine, and I think that you are worthy of an Empress' love. Know then, I here forget all former grievances, cancel all grudges, repeal your banishment, and call you home again. Because of your unrivalled merit, you and I have a new and better relationship, as shown by what I say here: Sir Valentine, you are a gentleman and well descended. Take Silvia as yours, for you have deserved her."

Silvia felt happy.

"I thank your grace," Valentine replied. "The gift has made me happy. I now implore you, for your daughter's sake, to grant one boon that I shall ask of you."

"I grant it, for your own sake, whatever it is," the Duke of Milan replied.

“These banished men that I have kept company with are men endued with worthy qualities. Forgive them what they have committed here and let them be recalled from their exile. They are reformed, civil, full of good, and fit for great service, worthy lord.”

“You have prevailed,” the Duke of Milan said. “I pardon them and you. Dispose of them as you know their worth and merit. Come, let us go. We will bring to a close all disagreements with entertainments, mirth, and marvelous festivities.”

“And, as we walk along, I will dare to be audacious enough in our conversation to make your grace smile,” Valentine said.

He motioned toward Julia, who was still wearing the male clothing of a page, and asked the Duke of Milan, “What do you think of this page, my lord?”

“I think the boy has grace in him,” the Duke of Milan replied. “He blushes.”

“I promise you, my lord, the page is more Grace than boy,” Valentine said.

He meant that Julia had the feminine charms of the Three Graces — goddesses of beauty, charm, and creativity.

“What do you mean by saying that?” the Duke of Milan asked.

“If you please,” Valentine replied, “I’ll tell you as we walk along, so that you will marvel at what has happened.”

He added, “Come, Proteus, your only penance is to hear the story of your loves revealed. Once that is done, our day of marriage shall be yours: One feast, one household, one mutual happiness. Julia and you shall be wed; at the same time, Silvia and I shall be wed.”

## ***APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE AUTHOR***

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine’s brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka “The Joker,” decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn’t been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don’t often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn’t let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor’s degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a master’s degree in English and a master’s degree in Philosophy.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

## **APPENDIX B: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE**

### **Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature**

*Arden of Faversham: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Arraignment, or Poetaster: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Epicene: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, or Humors Reconciled: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The New Inn, or The Light Heart: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Sejanus' Fall: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings*

*Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text*

*Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings*

*Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose*

*The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling*

*From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*

*George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston's Eastward Ho! A Retelling*

*George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: A Retelling*

*George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: A Retelling*

*George's Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: A Retelling*

*George Peele's Edward I: A Retelling*

*George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling*

*George-a-Greene: A Retelling*

*The History of King Leir: A Retelling*

*Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*

*Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose*

*J.W. Gent.'s The Valiant Scot: A Retelling*

*Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*

*John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English*

*John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Lady's Trial: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: A Retelling*

*John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: A Retelling*

*John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Queen: A Retelling*

*John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Campaspe: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Endymion, The Man in the Moon: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Galatea: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Midas: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Mother Bombie: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's Sappho and Phao: A Retelling*

*John Lyly's The Woman in the Moon: A Retelling*

*John Webster's The White Devil: A Retelling*

*King Edward III: A Retelling*

*Mankind: A Medieval Morality Play (A Retelling)*

*Margaret Cavendish's The Unnatural Tragedy: A Retelling*

*The Merry Devil of Edmonton: A Retelling*

*The Summoning of Everyman: A Medieval Morality Play (A Retelling)*

*Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling*

*The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling*

*Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling*

*Thomas Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside: A Retelling*

*Thomas Middleton's Women Beware Women: A Retelling*

*Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's The Roaring Girl: A Retelling*

*Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's The Changeling: A Retelling*

*The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems*

*Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose*

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

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose*