

Love's Labour's Lost

By

William Shakespeare

Adapted by Scott Free

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ACT I

Scene 1

The king of Navarre's park.

*Enter FERDINAND king of Navarre, BIRON, LONGAVILLE
and DUMAIN*

FERDINAND

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs
And then grace us in the disgrace of death;
When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavor of this present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge
And make us heirs of all eternity.
Therefore, brave conquerors,--for so you are,
That war against your own affections
And the huge army of the world's desires,--
Our late edict shall strongly stand in force:
Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
Our court shall be a little Academe,
Still and contemplative in living art.
You three, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville,
Have sworn for three years' term to live with me
My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here:
Your oaths are pass'd; and now subscribe your names,
That his own hand may strike his honour down
That violates the smallest branch herein:
If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,
Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too.

LONGAVILLE

I am resolved; 'tis but a three years' fast:
The mind shall banquet, though the body pine:
Fat paunches have lean pates, and dainty bits
Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.

DUMAIN

My loving lord, Dumain is mortified:
The grosser manner of these world's delights
He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves:
To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die;
With all these living in philosophy.

BIRON

I can but say their protestation over;
So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,
That is, to live and study here three years.
But there are other strict observances;
As, not to see a woman in that term,
Which I hope well is not enrolled there;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BIRON (cont'd)

And one day in a week to touch no food
And but one meal on every day beside,
The which I hope is not enrolled there;
And then, to sleep but three hours in the night,
And not be seen to wink of all the day--
When I was wont to think no harm all night
And make a dark night too of half the day--
Which I hope well is not enrolled there:
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!

FERDINAND

Your oath is pass'd to pass away from these.

BIRON

Let me say no, my liege, an if you please:
I only swore to study with your grace
And stay here in your court for three years' space.

LONGAVILLE

You swore to that, Biron, and to the rest.

BIRON

By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest.
What is the end of study? let me know.

DUMAIN

Why, that to know, which else we should not know.

BIRON

Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense?

FERDINAND

Ay, that is study's godlike recompense.

BIRON

Come on, then; I will swear to study so,
To know the thing I am forbid to know:
As thus,--to study where I well may dine,
When I to feast expressly am forbid;
Or study where to meet some mistress fine,
When mistresses from common sense are hid;
Or, having sworn too hard a keeping oath,
Study to break it and not break my troth.
If study's gain be thus and this be so,
Study knows that which yet it doth not know:
Swear me to this, and I will ne'er say no.

LONGAVILLE

These be the stops that hinder study quite
And train our intellects to vain delight.

BIRON

Why, all delights are vain; but that most vain,
 Which with pain purchased doth inherit pain:
 As, painfully to pore upon a book
 To seek the light of truth; while truth the while
 Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look:
 Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
 So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
 Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
 Study me how to please the eye indeed
 By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
 Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed
 And give him light that it was blinded by.
 Study is like the heaven's glorious sun
 That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks:
 Small have continual plodders ever won
 Save base authority from others' books
 These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
 That give a name to every fixed star
 Have no more profit of their shining nights
 Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
 Too much to know is to know nought but fame;
 And every godfather can give a name.

DUMAIN

How well he's read, to reason against reading!

LONGAVILLE

Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding!

FERDINAND

Well, sit you out: go home, Biron: adieu.

BIRON

No, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you:
 And though I have for barbarism spoke more
 Than for that angel knowledge you can say,
 Yet confident I'll keep what I have swore
 And bide the penance of each three years' day.
 Give me the paper; let me read the same;
 And to the strict'st decrees I'll write my name.

FERDINAND

How well this yielding rescues thee from shame!

BIRON

(reads)

'Item, That no woman shall come within a
 mile of my court:' Hath this been proclaimed?

LONGAVILLE

Four days ago.

BIRON

Let's see the penalty.

(Reads)

'On pain of losing her tongue.' Who devised this penalty?

DUMAIN

Marry, that did I.

BIRON

Sweet lord, and why?

DUMAIN

To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

BIRON

A dangerous law against gentility!

(reads)

'Item, If any man be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years, he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.'

This article, my liege, yourself must break;
For well you know here comes in embassy
The French king's daughter with yourself to speak--
A maid of grace and complete majesty--
About surrender up of Aquitaine
To her decrepit, sick and bedrid father:
Therefore this article is made in vain,
Or vainly comes the admired princess hither.

FERDINAND

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.

BIRON

So study evermore is overshot:
While it doth study to have what it would
It doth forget to do the thing it should,
And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,
'Tis won as towns with fire, so won, so lost.

FERDINAND

We must of force dispense with this decree;
She must lie here on mere necessity.

BIRON

Necessity will make us all forsworn
Three thousand times within this three years' space;
For every man with his affects is born,
Not by might master'd but by special grace:
If I break faith, this word shall speak for me;
I am forsworn on 'mere necessity.'
So to the laws at large I write my name:

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BIRON (cont'd)
Subscribes

And he that breaks them in the least degree
Stands in attainder of eternal shame:
Suggestions are to other as to me;
But I believe, although I seem so loath,
I am the last that will last keep his oath.
But is there no quick recreation granted?

Enter COSTARD with a letter

LONGAVILLE

Costard the swain and he shall be our sport;
And so to study, three years is but short.

COSTARD

Which is the duke's own person?

BIRON

This, fellow: what wouldest?

COSTARD

I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his
grace's tharborough: but I would see his own person
in flesh and blood.

DUMAIN

This is he.

COSTARD

There's villany abroad: this letter will tell you more.
Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me.

FERDINAND

A letter from the magnificent Costard?

BIRON

How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high
words.

LONGAVILLE

A high hope for a low heaven: God grant us patience!

DUMAIN

To hear? or forbear laughing?

LONGAVILLE

To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately; or to
forbear both.

BIRON

Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause to
climb in the merriness.

COSTARD

The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta.
The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

LONGAVILLE

In what manner?

COSTARD

In manner and form following, sir; all those three:
I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with
her upon the form, and then following her into the
park; which, put together, is in manner and form
following. Now, sir, for the manner,--it is the
manner of a man to speak to a woman: for the form,--
in some form.

DUMAIN

For the following, sir?

COSTARD

As it shall follow in my correction: and God defend
the right!

FERDINAND

Will you hear this letter with attention?

BIRON

As we would hear an oracle.

COSTARD

Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the
flesh.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'Great deputy, the welkin's vicegerent and
sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god,
and body's fostering patron.'

COSTARD

Not a word of Costard yet.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'So it is,'--

COSTARD

It may be so: but if I say it is so in
telling true, but so.

FERDINAND

Peace!

COSTARD

Be to me and every man that dares not fight!

FERDINAND

No words!

COSTARD

Of other men's secrets, I beseech you.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'So it is, besieged with sable-coloured melancholy, I did commend the black-oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when. About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which; which, I mean, I walked upon: it is y-cleped thy park. Then for the place where; where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and preposterous event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest; but to the place where; it standeth north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy curious-knotted garden: there did I, that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth,'--

COSTARD

Me.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'that unlettered small-knowing soul,'--

COSTARD

Me.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'that shallow vassal,'--

COSTARD

Still me.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'which, as you remember, hight Costard,'--

COSTARD

O, me!

FERDINAND

(reads)

'sorted and consorted, contrary to thy
established proclaimed edict and continent canon,
which with,--O, with--but with this I passion to say
wherewith,--

BIRON

With a wench.

FERDINAND

(reads)

'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a
female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a
woman. As my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on,
I have come to thee, to receive the meed of
punishment. For Jaquenetta,--so is the weaker vessel
called--I keep her as a vessel of the law's fury;
and shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring
her to trial. Thine, in all compliments of devoted
and heart-burning heat of duty.'

BIRON

This is not so well as I looked for, but the best
that ever I heard.

FERDINAND

Ay, the best for the worst. But, sirrah, what say
you?

COSTARD

Sir, I confess.

FERDINAND

Did you hear the proclamation?

COSTARD

I do confess much of the hearing it but little of
the marking of it.

LONGAVILLE

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken
with a wench.

COSTARD

I was taken with none, sir: I was taken with a damsel.

DUMAIN

Well, it was proclaimed 'damsel.'

COSTARD

This was no damsel, neither, sir; she was a virgin.

BIRON

It is so varied, too; for it was proclaimed 'virgin.'

COSTARD

If it were, I deny her virginity: I was taken with a maid.

FERDINAND

This maid will not serve your turn, sir.

COSTARD

This maid will serve my turn, sir.

FERDINAND

Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast a week with bran and water.

COSTARD

I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

FERDINAND

My Lord Biron, shall be your keeper:
And go we, lords, to put in practise that
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

Exeunt FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN

BIRON

I'll lay my head to any good man's hat,
These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn.
Sirrah, come on.

COSTARD

I suffer for the truth, sir; for true it is, I was taken with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl; and therefore welcome the sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and till then, sit thee down, sorrow!

BIRON

Thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou be pardoned.

COSTARD

Well, sir, I hope, when I do it, I shall do it on a full stomach.

BIRON

Thou shalt be heavily punished.

COSTARD

I am more bound to you than your fellows, for they are but lightly rewarded. Let me not be pent up, sir: I will fast, being loose.

BIRON

No, sir; that were fast and loose.

COSTARD

Well, if ever I do see the merry days of desolation
that I have seen, some shall see.

BIRON

What shall some see?

COSTARD

Nay, nothing, Master, but what they look upon.
It is not for prisoners to be too silent in their
words; and therefore I will say nothing: I thank
God I have as little patience as another man; and
therefore I can be quiet.

ACT II

Scene 1

Enter the PRINCESS of France, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, and BOYET.

BOYET

Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits:
 Consider who the king your father sends,
 To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:
 Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,
 To parley with the sole inheritor
 Of all perfections that a man may owe,
 Matchless Navarre; the plea of no less weight
 Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.
 Be now as prodigal of all dear grace
 As Nature was in making graces dear
 When she did starve the general world beside
 And prodigally gave them all to you.

PRINCESS

Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
 Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:
 Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye,
 Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues:
 I am less proud to hear you tell my worth
 Than you much willing to be counted wise
 In spending your wit in the praise of mine.
 But now to task the tasker: good Boyet,
 You are not ignorant, all-telling fame
 Doth noise abroad, Navarre hath made a vow,
 Till painful study shall outwear three years,
 No woman may approach his silent court:
 Therefore to's seemeth it a needful course,
 Before we enter his forbidden gates,
 To know his pleasure; and in that behalf,
 Bold of your worthiness, we single you
 As our best-moving fair solicitor.
 Tell him, the daughter of the King of France,
 On serious business, craving quick dispatch,
 Importunes personal conference with his grace:
 Haste, signify so much; while we attend,
 Like humble-visaged suitors, his high will.

BOYET

Proud of employment, willingly I go.

PRINCESS

All pride is willing pride, and yours is so.

Exit BOYET

PRINCESS

Who are the votaries, my loving ladies,
That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke?

MARIA

Lord Longaville is one.

PRINCESS

Know you the man?

MARIA

I know him, madam: at a marriage-feast,
Between Lord Perigort and the beauteous heir
Of Jaques Falconbridge, solemnized
In Normandy, saw I this Longaville:
A man of sovereign parts he is esteem'd;
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms:
Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.
The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,
If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,
Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will;
Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills
It should none spare that come within his power.

PRINCESS

Some merry mocking lord, belike; is't so?

MARIA

They say so most that most his humours know.

PRINCESS

Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow.
Who are the rest?

KATHARINE

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth,
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved:
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill;
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,
And shape to win grace though he had no wit.
I saw him at the Duke Alencon's once;
And much too little of that good I saw
Is my report to his great worthiness.

ROSALINE

Another of these students at that time
Was there with him, if I have heard a truth.
Biron they call him; but a merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROSALINE (cont'd)

Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
 Delivers in such apt and gracious words
 That aged ears play truant at his tales
 And younger hearings are quite ravished;
 So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

PRINCESS

God bless my ladies! are they all in love,
 That every one her own hath garnished
 With such bedecking ornaments of praise?

Re-enter BOYET

PRINCESS

Now, what admittance, Boyet?

BOYET

Navarre had notice of your fair approach;
 And he and his competitors in oath
 Were all address'd to meet you, gentle lady,
 Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt:
 He rather means to lodge you in the field,
 Like one that comes here to besiege his court,
 Than seek a dispensation for his oath,
 To let you enter his unpeopled house.
 Here comes Navarre.

Enter FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN, and BIRON.

FERDINAND

Fair princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.

PRINCESS

'Fair' I give you back again; and 'welcome' I have
 not yet: the roof of this court is too high to be
 yours; and welcome to the wide fields too base to be
 mine.

FERDINAND

You shall be welcome, madam, to my court.

PRINCESS

I will be welcome, then: conduct me thither.

FERDINAND

Hear me, dear lady; I have sworn an oath.

PRINCESS

Our Lady help my lord! he'll be forsworn.

FERDINAND

Not for the world, fair madam, by my will.

PRINCESS

Why, will shall break it; will and nothing else.

FERDINAND

Your ladyship is ignorant what it is.

PRINCESS

Were my lord so, his ignorance were wise,
Where now his knowledge must prove ignorance.
I hear your grace hath sworn out house-keeping:
Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,
And sin to break it.
But pardon me. I am too sudden-bold:
To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.
Vouchsafe to read the purpose of my coming,
And suddenly resolve me in my suit.

Boyet hands Ferdinand a scroll.

FERDINAND

Madam, I will, if suddenly I may.

PRINCESS

You will the sooner, that I were away;
For you'll prove perjured if you make me stay.

BIRON

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

ROSALINE

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

BIRON

I know you did.

ROSALINE

How needless was it then to ask the question!

BIRON

You must not be so quick.

ROSALINE

'Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.

BIRON

Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.

ROSALINE

Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

BIRON

What time o' day?

ROSALINE

The hour that fools should ask.

BIRON

Now fair befall your mask!

ROSALINE

Fair fall the face it covers!

BIRON

And send you many lovers!

ROSALINE

Amen, so you be none.

BIRON

Nay, then will I be gone.

FERDINAND

Madam, your father here doth intimate
The payment of a hundred thousand crowns;
Being but the one half of an entire sum
Disbursed by my father in his wars.
But say that he or we, as neither have,
Received that sum, yet there remains unpaid
A hundred thousand more; in surety of the which,
One part of Aquitaine is bound to us,
Although not valued to the money's worth.
If then the king your father will restore
But that one half which is unsatisfied,
We will give up our right in Aquitaine,
And hold fair friendship with his majesty.
But that, it seems, he little purposeth,
For here he doth demand to have repaid
A hundred thousand crowns; and not demands,
On payment of a hundred thousand crowns,
To have his title live in Aquitaine;
Which we much rather had depart withal
And have the money by our father lent
Than Aquitaine so gelded as it is.
Dear Princess, were not his requests so far
From reason's yielding, your fair self should make
A yielding 'gainst some reason in my breast
And go well satisfied to France again.

PRINCESS

You do the king my father too much wrong
And wrong the reputation of your name,
In so unseeming to confess receipt
Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

FERDINAND

I do protest I never heard of it;
 And if you prove it, I'll repay it back
 Or yield up Aquitaine.

PRINCESS

We arrest your word.
 Boyet, you can produce acquittances
 For such a sum from special officers
 Of Charles his father.

FERDINAND

Satisfy me so.

BOYET

So please your grace, the packet is not come
 Where that and other specialties are bound:
 To-morrow you shall have a sight of them.

FERDINAND

It shall suffice me: at which interview
 All liberal reason I will yield unto.
 Meantime receive such welcome at my hand
 As honour without breach of honour may
 Make tender of to thy true worthiness:
 You may not come, fair princess, in my gates;
 But here without you shall be so received
 As you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart,
 Though so denied fair harbour in my house.
 Your own good thoughts excuse me, and farewell:
 To-morrow shall we visit you again.

PRINCESS

Sweet health and fair desires consort your grace!

FERDINAND

Thy own wish wish I thee in every place!

Exit

DUMAIN

Madame, I pray you, a word: what lady is that same?

BOYET

The heir of Alencon, Katharine her name.

DUMAIN

A gallant lady. Madame, fare you well.

Exit

LONGAVILLE

I beseech you a word: what is she in the white?

BOYET

A woman sometimes, an you saw her in the light.

LONGAVILLE

Perchance light in the light. I desire her name.

BOYET

She hath but one for herself; to desire that were a shame.

LONGAVILLE

Pray you, whose daughter?

BOYET

Her mother's, I have heard.

LONGAVILLE

God's blessing on your head!

BOYET

Good sir, be not offended.
She is an heir of Falconbridge.

LONGAVILLE

Nay, my choler is ended.
She is a most sweet lady.

BOYET

Not unlike, sir, that may be.

Exit LONGAVILLE

BIRON

What's her name in the cap?

BOYET

Rosaline, by good hap.

BIRON

Is she wedded or no?

BOYET

To her will, sir, or so.

BIRON

You are welcome, madam: adieu.

BOYET

Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you.

Exit BIRON

BOYET

If my observation, which very seldom lies,
By the heart's still rhetoric disclosed with eyes,
Deceive me not now, Navarre is infected.

PRINCESS

With what?

BOYET

With that which we lovers entitle affected.

PRINCESS

Come to our pavilion: Boyet is disposed.

BOYET

But to speak that in words which their eyes hath
disclosed.

I only have made a mouth of their eyes,
By adding a tongue which I know will not lie.

ROSALINE

Thou art an old love-monger and speakest skilfully.

MARIA

She is Cupid's grandmother and learns news of him.

KATHARINE

Then was Venus like her mother, for her father is but
grim.

BOYET

Do you hear, my mad wenches?

ROSALINE

No.

BOYET

What then, do you see?

PRINCESS

Ay, our way to be gone.

BOYET

You are too hard for me.

Exeunt

ACT III

Scene 1

Enter Costard working on a letter.

COSTARD

Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.
 By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty,
 enfreedoming thy person; thou wert immured,
 restrained, captivated, bound. True, true; and now you
 will be my purgation and let me loose. I give thee thy
 liberty, set thee from durance; and,
 in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this:
 bear this significant to the country maid Jaquenetta:
 there is remuneration; for the best ward of mine
 honour is rewarding my dependents.
 Now will I look to this remuneration. Remuneration!
 O, that's the Latin word for three farthings.

Enter BIRON

BIRON

O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.

COSTARD

Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man
 buy for a remuneration?

BIRON

What is a remuneration?

COSTARD

Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.

BIRON

Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk.

COSTARD

I thank your worship: God be wi' you!

BIRON

Stay, slave; I must employ thee:
 As thou wilt win my favour, good my knave,
 Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

COSTARD

When would you have it done, sir?

BIRON

This afternoon.

COSTARD

Well, I will do it, sir: fare you well.

BIRON

Thou knowest not what it is.

COSTARD

I shall know, sir, when I have done it.

BIRON

Why, villain, thou must know first.

COSTARD

I will come to your worship to-morrow morning.

BIRON

It must be done this afternoon.
Hark, slave, it is but this:
The princess comes to hunt here in the park,
And in her train there is a gentle lady;
When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,
And Rosaline they call her: ask for her;
And to her white hand see thou do commend
This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon; go.

Giving him a shilling

COSTARD

Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration,
a'leven-pence farthing better: most sweet gardon! I
will do it sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration!

Exit

BIRON

And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's
whip;
What, I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan:
Some men must love my lady and some Joan.

Exit

ACT IV

Scene 1

Enter the PRINCESS, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE

PRINCESS

Well to-day we shall have our dispatch:
On Saturday we will return to France.
Then, my friend, where is the bush
That we must stand and play the murderer in?

BOYET

Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;
A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

PRINCESS

I thank my beauty, I am fair that shoot,
And thereupon thou speak'st the fairest shoot.

BOYET

Pardon me, for I meant not so.

KATHARINE

What, what? first praise her and again say no?
O short-lived pride! Not fair? alack for woe

BOYET

Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty
Only for praise sake, when they strive to be
Lords o'er their lords?

ROSALINE

Only for praise: and praise we may afford
To any lady that subdues a lord.

BOYET

Here comes a member of the commonwealth.

Enter COSTARD

COSTARD

God dig-you-den all! Pray you, which is the head lady?

MARIA

Thou shalt know her, fellow, by the rest that have no
heads.

COSTARD

Which is the greatest lady, the highest?

ROSALINE

The thickest and the tallest.

COSTARD

The thickest and the tallest! it is so; truth is truth.
 An your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit,
 One o' these maids' girdles for your waist should be
 fit.

Are not you the chief woman? you are the thickest here.

PRINCESS

What's your will, sir? what's your will?

COSTARD

I have a letter from Monsieur Biron to one Lady
 Rosaline.

PRINCESS

O, thy letter, thy letter! he's a good friend of mine:
 Stand aside, good bearer. Boyet, you can carve;
 Break up this capon.

BOYET

I am bound to serve.
 This letter is mistook, it importeth none here;
 It is writ to Jaquenetta.

PRINCESS

We will read it, I swear.
 Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.

BOYET

(reads)

'By heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible;
 true, that thou art beauteous; truth itself, that
 thou art lovely. More fairer than fair, beautiful
 than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have
 commiseration on thy heroical vassal! The
 magnanimous and most illustrate king Cophetua set
 eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar
 Zenelophon; and he it was that might rightly say,
 Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothanize in the
 vulgar,--O base and obscure vulgar!--videlicet, He
 came, saw, and overcame: he came, one; saw two;
 overcame, three. Who came? the king: why did he
 come? to see: why did he see? to overcome: to
 whom came he? to the beggar: what saw he? the
 beggar: who overcame he? the beggar. The
 conclusion is victory: on whose side? the king's.
 The captive is enriched: on whose side? the
 beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial: on whose
 side? the king's: no, on both in one, or one in
 both. I am the king; for so stands the comparison:

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOYET (cont'd)

thou the beggar; for so witnesseth thy lowliness.
 Shall I command thy love? I may: shall I enforce
 thy love? I could: shall I entreat thy love? I
 will. What shalt thou exchange for rags? robes;
 for tittles? titles; for thyself? me. Thus,
 expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot,
 my eyes on thy picture. and my heart on thy every
 part. Thine, in the dearest design of industry,
 COSTARD'

PRINCESS

What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?
 What vane? what weathercock? did you ever hear better?
 Thou fellow, a word:
 Who gave thee this letter?

COSTARD

I told you; my lord.

MARIA

To whom shouldst thou give it?

COSTARD

From my lord to my lady.

KATHARINE

From which lord to which lady?

COSTARD

From my lord Biron, a good master of mine,
 To a lady of France that he call'd Rosaline.

PRINCESS

Thou hast mistaken his letter. Come away.

(To ROSALINE)

Here, sweet, put up this: 'twill be thine another day.

Exeunt

Scene 2

Enter BIRON, with a paper

BIRON

The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing
 myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in
 a pitch,--pitch that defiles: defile! a foul
 word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say
 the fool said, and so say I, and I the fool: well
 proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as
 Ajax: it kills sheep; it kills me, I a sheep:
 well proved again o' my side! I will not love: if

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BIRON (cont'd)

I do, hang me; i' faith, I will not. O, but her eye,--by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love: and it hath taught me to rhyme and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! By the world, I would not care a pin, if the other three were in. Here comes one with a paper: God give him grace to groan!

Stands aside

Enter FERDINAND, with a paper

FERDINAND

Ay me!

BIRON

[Aside] Shot, by heaven! Proceed, sweet Cupid: thou hast thumped him with thy bird-bolt under the left pap. In faith, secrets!

FERDINAND

[Reads]

So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not
To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,
As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote
The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows:
Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright
Through the transparent bosom of the deep,
As doth thy face through tears of mine give light;
Thou shonest in every tear that I do weep:
No drop but as a coach doth carry thee;
So ridest thou triumphing in my woe.
Do but behold the tears that swell in me,
And they thy glory through my grief will show:
But do not love thyself; then thou wilt keep
My tears for glasses, and still make me weep.
O queen of queens! how far dost thou excel,
No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell. How
shall she know my griefs? I'll drop the paper:
Sweet leaves, shade folly. Who is he comes here?

Steps aside

What, Longaville! and reading! listen, ear.

BIRON

Now, in thy likeness, one more fool appear!

Enter LONGAVILLE, with a paper

LONGAVILLE

Ay me, I am forsworn!

BIRON

Why, he comes in like a perjure, wearing papers.

FERDINAND

In love, I hope: sweet fellowship in shame!

BIRON

One drunkard loves another of the name.

LONGAVILLE

Am I the first that have been perjured so?

BIRON

I could put thee in comfort. Not by two that I know:
Thou makest the triumvir, the corner-cap of society,
The shape of Love's Tyburn that hangs up simplicity.

LONGAVILLE

I fear these stubborn lines lack power to move:
O sweet Maria, empress of my love!
These numbers will I tear, and write in prose.

BIRON

O, rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid's hose:
Disfigure not his slop.

LONGAVILLE

This same shall go.

Reads

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.
Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is:
Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine,
Exhalest this vapour-vow; in thee it is:
If broken then, it is no fault of mine:
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
To lose an oath to win a paradise?

BIRON

This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,
A green goose a goddess: pure, pure idolatry.
God amend us, God amend! we are much out o' the way.

LONGAVILLE

By whom shall I send this?--Company! stay.

Steps aside

BIRON

All hid, all hid; an old infant play.
Like a demigod here sit I in the sky.
And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'ereye.
More sacks to the mill! O heavens, I have my wish!

Enter DUMAIN, with a paper
Dumain transform'd! four woodcocks in a dish!

DUMAIN

O most divine Kate!

BIRON

O most profane coxcomb!

DUMAIN

By heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!

BIRON

By earth, she is not, corporal, there you lie.

DUMAIN

Her amber hair for foul hath amber quoted.

BIRON

An amber-colour'd raven was well noted.

DUMAIN

As upright as the cedar.

BIRON

Stoop, I say;
Her shoulder is with child.

DUMAIN

As fair as day.

BIRON

Ay, as some days; but then no sun must shine.

DUMAIN

O that I had my wish!

LONGAVILLE

And I had mine!

FERDINAND

And I mine too, good Lord!

BIRON

Amen, so I had mine: is not that a good word?

DUMAIN

I would forget her; but a fever she
Reigns in my blood and will remember'd be.

BIRON

A fever in your blood! why, then incision
Would let her out in saucers: sweet misprision!

DUMAIN

Once more I'll read the ode that I have writ.

BIRON

Once more I'll mark how love can vary wit.

DUMAIN

[Reads]

On a day--alack the day!--
 Love, whose month is ever May,
 Spied a blossom passing fair
 Playing in the wanton air:
 Through the velvet leaves the wind,
 All unseen, can passage find;
 That the lover, sick to death,
 Wish himself the heaven's breath.
 Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
 Air, would I might triumph so!
 But, alack, my hand is sworn
 Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn;
 Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,
 Youth so apt to pluck a sweet!
 Do not call it sin in me,
 That I am forsworn for thee;
 Thou for whom Jove would swear
 Juno but an Ethiope were;
 And deny himself for Jove,
 Turning mortal for thy love.
 This will I send, and something else more plain,
 That shall express my true love's fasting pain.
 O, would the king, Biron, and Longaville,
 Were lovers too! Ill, to example ill,
 Would from my forehead wipe a perjured note;
 For none offend where all alike do dote.

LONGAVILLE

[Advancing] Dumain, thy love is far from charity.
 You may look pale, but I should blush, I know,
 To be o'erheard and taken napping so.

FERDINAND

[Advancing] Come, sir, you blush; as his your case is such;
 You chide at him, offending twice as much;
 You do not love Maria; Longaville
 Did never sonnet for her sake compile,
 Nor never lay his wreathed arms athwart
 His loving bosom to keep down his heart.
 I have been closely shrouded in this bush
 And mark'd you both and for you both did blush:
 I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion,
 Saw sighs reek from you, noted well your passion:
 Ay me! says one; O Jove! the other cries;
 One, her hairs were gold, crystal the other's eyes:

To LONGAVILLE

You would for paradise break faith, and troth;

To DUMAIN

And Jove, for your love, would infringe an oath.
 What will Biron say when that he shall hear
 Faith so infringed, which such zeal did swear?
 How will he scorn! how will he spend his wit!
 How will he triumph, leap and laugh at it!
 For all the wealth that ever I did see,
 I would not have him know so much by me.

BIRON

Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy.
 (Advancing)

Ah, good my liege, I pray thee, pardon me!
 Good heart, what grace hast thou, thus to reprove
 These worms for loving, that art most in love?
 Your eyes do make no coaches; in your tears
 There is no certain princess that appears;
 You'll not be perjured, 'tis a hateful thing;
 Tush, none but minstrels like of sonneting!
 But are you not ashamed? nay, are you not,
 All three of you, to be thus much o'ershot?
 You found his mote; the king your mote did see;
 But I a beam do find in each of three.
 O, what a scene of foolery have I seen,
 Of sighs, of groans, of sorrow and of teen!
 O me, with what strict patience have I sat,
 To see a king transformed to a gnat!
 Where lies thy grief, O, tell me, good Dumain?
 And gentle Longaville, where lies thy pain?
 And where my liege's? all about the breast:

FERDINAND

Too bitter is thy jest.
 Are we betray'd thus to thy over-view?

BIRON

Not you to me, but I betray'd by you:
 I, that am honest; I, that hold it sin
 To break the vow I am engaged in;
 I am betray'd, by keeping company
 With men like men of inconstancy.
 When shall you see me write a thing in rhyme?
 Or groan for love? or spend a minute's time
 In pruning me? When shall you hear that I
 Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye,
 A gait, a state, a brow, a breast, a waist,
 A leg, a limb?

FERDINAND

Soft! whither away so fast?
 A true man or a thief that gallops so?

BIRON

I post from love: good lover, let me go.

Enter COSTARD

COSTARD

God bless the king!

FERDINAND

What present hast thou there?

COSTARD

Some certain treason.

FERDINAND

What makes treason here?

COSTARD

Nay, it makes nothing, sir.

FERDINAND

If it mar nothing neither,
 The treason and you go in peace away together.

COSTARD

I beseech your grace, let this letter be read:
 Jacquetta misdoubts it; 'twas treason, she said.

FERDINAND

Biron, read it over.

Giving him the paper

TO COSTARD

Where hadst thou it?

BIRON tears the letter

FERDINAND

How now! what is in you? why dost thou tear it?

BIRON

A toy, my liege, a toy: your grace needs not fear it.

LONGAVILLE

It did move him to passion, and therefore let's hear it.

DUMAIN

It is Biron's writing, and here is his name.

Gathering up the pieces

BIRON

[To COSTARD] Ah, you whoreson loggerhead! you were born to do me shame.

Guilty, my lord, guilty! I confess, I confess.

FERDINAND

What?

BIRON

That you three fools lack'd me fool to make up the mess:

He, he, and you, and you, my liege, and I,

Are pick-purses in love, and we deserve to die.

O, dismiss this audience, and I shall tell you more.

DUMAIN

Now the number is even.

BIRON

True, true; we are four.

Will this turtle be gone?

FERDINAND

Hence, sir; away!

COSTARD

Walk aside the true folk, and let the traitors stay.

Exeunt COSTARD

BIRON

Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O, let us embrace!

As true we are as flesh and blood can be:

The sea will ebb and flow, heaven show his face;

Young blood doth not obey an old decree:

We cannot cross the cause why we were born;

Therefore of all hands must we be forsworn.

FERDINAND

Saint Cupid, then! and, soldiers, to the field!

BIRON

Advance your standards, and upon them, lords;
Pell-mell, down with them! but be first advised,
In conflict that you get the sun of them.

LONGAVILLE

Now to plain-dealing; lay these glozes by:
Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France?

DUMAIN

And win them too: therefore let us devise
Some entertainment for them in their tents.

BIRON

First, from the park let us conduct them thither;
Then homeward every man attach the hand
Of his fair mistress: in the afternoon
We will with some strange pastime solace them,
Such as the shortness of the time can shape;
For revels, dances, masks and merry hours
Forerun fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.

FERDINAND

Away, away! no time shall be omitted
That will betime, and may by us be fitted.

Exeunt

ACT V

Scene 1

Enter COSTARD with a letter.

COSTARD

(speaking to himself)

The king is a noble gentleman, and my familiar, I do assure ye, very good friend:

for what is inward between us, let it pass.

I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy;

I beseech thee, apparel thy head:

and among other important and most serious designs, and of great import indeed, too, but let that pass:

for I must tell thee, it will please his grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder:

but, sweet heart, let that pass.

By the world, I recount no fable:

some certain special honours it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Costard, a soldier, a man of travel, that hath seen the world;

but let that pass.

The very all of all is,--but, sweet heart, I do implore secrecy,--that the king would have me present the princess with some delightful show, or pageant, or antique, or firework.

Now, understanding that I am good at such eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth, as it were, I shall present before her the Nine Worthies.

As concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day, to be rendered by our assistance....Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?

I will play three myself at the king's command, and this most gallant, illustrate, and learned gentleman, before the princess;

I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies! Hector, Judas Maccabaeus; Pompey the Great;

Hercules,--Pardon, sir; error: I am not quantity enough for that Worthy's thumb:

I am not so big as the end of his club.

Shall I have audience? I shall present Hercules in minority:

his enter and exit shall be strangling a snake;
and I will have an apology for that purpose.

An excellent device!

so, if any of the audience hiss, some may cry 'Well done, Infant Hercules! now thou crushest the snake!' that is the way to make an offence gracious, though few have the grace to do it.

I'll make one in a dance, or so; or I will play on the tabour to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.

To our sport, away!

Scene 2

Enter the PRINCESS, KATHARINE, ROSALINE, and MARIA

PRINCESS

Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart,
If fairings come thus plentifully in:
A lady wall'd about with diamonds!
Look you what I have from the loving king.

ROSALINE

Madame, came nothing else along with that?

PRINCESS

Nothing but this! yes, as much love in rhyme
As would be cramm'd up in a sheet of paper,
Writ o' both sides the leaf, margent and all,
That he was fain to seal on Cupid's
name. But Rosaline, you have a favour too:
Who sent it? and what is it?

ROSALINE

I would you knew:
An if my face were but as fair as yours,
My favour were as great; be witness this.
Nay, I have verses too, I thank Biron:
The numbers true; and, were the numbering too,
I were the fairest goddess on the ground:
I am compared to twenty thousand fairs.
O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!

PRINCESS

Any thing like?

ROSALINE

Much in the letters; nothing in the praise.

PRINCESS

But, Katharine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?

KATHARINE

Madam, this glove.

PRINCESS

Did he not send you twain?

KATHARINE

Yes, madam, and moreover
Some thousand verses of a faithful lover,
A huge translation of hypocrisy,
Vilely compiled, profound simplicity.

MARIA

This and these pearls to me sent Longaville:
The letter is too long by half a mile.

PRINCESS

I think no less. Dost thou not wish in heart
The chain were longer and the letter short?

MARIA

Ay, or I would these hands might never part.

PRINCESS

We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.

ROSALINE

They are worse fools to purchase mocking so.

(cont'd)

PRINCESS

Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in her face.

Enter BOYET

BOYET

O, I am stabb'd with laughter! Where's her grace?

PRINCESS

Thy news Boyet?

BOYET

Prepare, madam, prepare!
Arm, wenches, arm! encounters mounted are
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOYET (cont'd)

Against your peace: Love doth approach disguised,
 Armed in arguments; you'll be surprised:
 Muster your wits; stand in your own defence;
 Or hide your heads like cowards, and fly hence.

MARIA

Saint Denis to Saint Cupid! What are they
 That charge their breath against us? say, scout, say.

BOYET

Under the cool shade of a sycamore
 I thought to close mine eyes some half an hour;
 When, lo! to interrupt my purposed rest,
 Toward that shade I might behold address
 The king and his companions: warily
 I stole into a neighbour thicket by,
 And overheard what you shall overhear,
 That, by and by, disguised they will be here.

KATHARINE

But what, but what, come they to visit us?

BOYET

They do, they do: and are apparell'd thus.
 Like Muscovites or Russians, as I guess.
 Their purpose is to parle, to court and dance;
 And every one his love-feat will advance
 Unto his several mistress, which they'll know
 By favours several which they did bestow.

PRINCESS

And will they so? the gallants shall be task'd;
 For, ladies, we shall every one be mask'd;
 And not a man of them shall have the grace,
 Despite of suit, to see a lady's face.
 Hold, Rosaline, this favour thou shalt wear,
 And then the king will court thee for his dear;
 Hold, take thou this, my sweet, and give me thine,
 So shall Biron take me for Rosaline.
 And change your favours too; so shall your loves
 Woo contrary, deceived by these removes.

ROSALINE

Come on, then; wear the favours most in sight.

MARIA

But in this changing what is your intent?

PRINCESS

The effect of my intent is to cross theirs:
 They do it but in mocking merriment;
 And mock for mock is only my intent.

KATHERINE

But shall we dance, if they desire to't?

PRINCESS

No, to the death, we will not move a foot;
 Nor to their penn'd speech render we no grace,
 But while 'tis spoke each turn away her face.

BOYET

Why, that contempt will kill the speaker's heart,
 And quite divorce his memory from his part.

PRINCESS

Therefore I do it; and I make no doubt
 The rest will ne'er come in, if he be out
 There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown,
 To make theirs ours and ours none but our own:
 So shall we stay, mocking intended game,
 And they, well mock'd, depart away with shame.

Trumpets sound within

BOYET

The trumpet sounds: be mask'd; the maskers come.

The Ladies mask

*Enter FERDINAND, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN,
 in Russian habits, and masked*

FERDINAND

All hail, the richest beauties on the earth!--

BOYET

Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.

DUMAIN

A holy parcel of the fairest dames.
 The Ladies turn their backs to him
 That ever turn'd their--backs--to mortal views!

BIRON

(Aside to Duman)
 Their eyes, their eyes!

DUMAIN

That ever turn'd their eyes to mortal views!--Out--

BOYET

True; out indeed.

LONGAVILLE

Out of your favours, heavenly spirits, vouchsafe
Not to behold--

BIRON

(Aside to Longaville)
Once to behold!

LONGAVILLE

Once to behold with your sun-beamed eyes,
--with your sun-beamed eyes--

BOYET

They will not answer to that epithet;
You were best call it 'daughter-beamed eyes.'

LONGAVILLE

They do not mark me, and that brings me out.

BIRON

Is this your perfectness? Be gone!

ROSALINE

What would these strangers? know their minds, Boyet:
If they do speak our language, 'tis our will:
That some plain man recount their purposes
Know what they would.

BOYET

What would you with the princess?

BIRON

Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROSALINE

What would they, say they?

BOYET

Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROSALINE

Why, that they have; and bid them so be gone.

BOYET

She says, you have it, and you may be gone.

FERDINAND

Say to her, we have measured many miles
To tread a measure with her on this grass.

BOYET

They say, that they have measured many a mile
To tread a measure with you on this grass.

ROSALINE

It is not so. Ask them how many inches
Is in one mile: if they have measured many,
The measure then of one is easily told.

BOYET

If to come hither you have measured miles,
And many miles, the princess bids you tell
How many inches doth fill up one mile.

BIRON

Tell her, we measure them by weary steps.

BOYET

She hears herself.

ROSALINE

How many weary steps,
Of many weary miles you have o'ergone,
Are number'd in the travel of one mile?

BIRON

We number nothing that we spend for you:
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,
That we may do it still without accompt.
Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,
That we, like savages, may worship it.

ROSALINE

My face is but a moon, and clouded too.

FERDINAND

Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do!
Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars, to shine,
Those clouds removed, upon our watery eyne.

ROSALINE

Play, music, then! Nay, you must do it soon.
Not yet! no dance! Thus change I like the moon.

FERDINAND

Will you not dance? How come you thus estranged?

ROSALINE

You took the moon at full, but now she's changed.

FERDINAND

Yet still she is the moon, and I the man.
The music plays; vouchsafe some motion to it.

ROSALINE

Our ears vouchsafe it.

FERDINAND

But your legs should do it.

ROSALINE

Since you are strangers and come here by chance,
We'll not be nice: take hands. We will not dance.

FERDINAND

If you deny to dance, let's hold more chat.

ROSALINE

In private, then.

FERDINAND

I am best pleased with that.

They converse apart

BIRON

White-handed mistress, one sweet word with thee.

PRINCESS

Honey, and milk, and sugar; there is three.

BIRON

One word in secret.

PRINCESS

Let it not be sweet.

BIRON

Thou grievest my gall.

PRINCESS

Gall! bitter.

BIRON

Therefore meet.

They converse apart

DUMAIN

Will you vouchsafe with me to change a word?

MARIA

Name it.

DUMAIN

Fair lady,--

MARIA

Say you so? Fair lord,--
Take that for your fair lady.

DUMAIN

Please it you,
As much in private, and I'll bid adieu.

They converse apart

KATHARINE

What, was your vizard made without a tongue?

LONGAVILLE

I know the reason, lady, why you ask.

KATHARINE

O for your reason! quickly, sir; I long.

LONGAVILLE

You have a double tongue within your mask,
And would afford my speechless vizard half.

KATHARINE

No, I'll not be your half
Take all, and wean it; it may prove an ox.

LONGAVILLE

Look, how you butt yourself in these sharp mocks!
Will you give horns, chaste lady? do not so.

KATHARINE

Then die a calf, before your horns do grow.

LONGAVILLE

One word in private with you, ere I die.

KATHARINE

Bleat softly then; the butcher hears you cry.

They converse apart

BOYET

The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen
As is the razor's edge invisible,
Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen,
Above the sense of sense; so sensible
Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings
Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter
things.

ROSALINE

Not one word more, my maids; break off, break off.

BIRON

By heaven, all dry-beaten with pure scoff!

FERDINAND

Farewell, mad wenches; you have simple wits.

PRINCESS

Twenty adieus, my frozen Muscovits.

Exeunt FERDINAND and Lords
Are these the breed of wits so wonder'd at?

BOYET

Tapers they are, with your sweet breaths puff'd out.

ROSALINE

O, they were all in lamentable cases!
The king was weeping-ripe for a good word.

PRINCESS

Biron did swear himself out of all suit.

MARIA

Dumain was at my service, and his sword:
No point, quoth I; my servant straight was mute.

KATHARINE

Lord Longaville said, I came o'er his heart;
And trow you what he called me?

PRINCESS

Qualm, perhaps.

KATHARINE

Yes, in good faith.

PRINCESS

Go, sickness as thou art!

ROSALINE

Well, better wits have worn plain statute-caps.
But will you hear? the king is my love sworn.

PRINCESS

And quick Biron hath plighted faith to me.

KATHARINE

And Longaville was for my service born.

MARIA

Dumain is mine, as sure as bark on tree.

BOYET

Madam, and pretty mistresses, give ear:
Immediately they will again be here
In their own shapes; for it can never be
They will digest this harsh indignity.

PRINCESS

Will they return?

BOYET

They will, they will, God knows,
 And leap for joy, though they are lame with blows:
 Therefore change favours; and, when they repair,
 Blow like sweet roses in this summer air.

(cont'd)

PRINCESS

Avaunt, perplexity! What shall we do,
 If they return in their own shapes to woo?

ROSALINE

Good madam, if by me you'll be advised,
 Let's, mock them still, as well known as disguised:
 Let us complain to them what fools were here,
 Disguised like Muscovites, in shapeless gear;
 And wonder what they were and to what end
 Their shallow shows and prologue vilely penn'd
 And their rough carriage so ridiculous,
 Should be presented at our tent to us.

BOYET

Ladies, withdraw: the gallants are at hand.

*Re-enter FERDINAND, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and
 DUMAIN, in their proper habits*

FERDINAND

All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!

PRINCESS

'Fair' in 'all hail' is foul, as I conceive.

FERDINAND

Construe my speeches better, if you may.

PRINCESS

Then wish me better; I will give you leave.

FERDINAND

We came to visit you, and purpose now
 To lead you to our court; vouchsafe it then.

PRINCESS

This field shall hold me; and so hold your vow:
 Nor God, nor I, delights in perjured men.

FERDINAND

Rebuke me not for that which you provoke:
 The virtue of your eye must break my oath.

PRINCESS

You nickname virtue; vice you should have spoke;
 For virtue's office never breaks men's troth.
 Now by my maiden honour, yet as pure
 As the unsullied lily, I protest,
 A world of torments though I should endure,
 I would not yield to be your house's guest;
 So much I hate a breaking cause to be
 Of heavenly oaths, vow'd with integrity.

FERDINAND

O, you have lived in desolation here,
 Unseen, unvisited, much to our shame.

PRINCESS

Not so, my lord; it is not so, I swear;
 We have had pastimes here and pleasant game:
 A mess of Russians left us but of late.

FERDINAND

How, madam! Russians!

PRINCESS

Ay, in truth, my lord;
 Trim gallants, full of courtship and of state.

ROSALINE

Madam, speak true. It is not so, my lord:
 My lady, to the manner of the days,
 In courtesy gives undeserving praise.
 We four indeed confronted were with four
 In Russian habit: here they stay'd an hour,
 And talk'd apace; and in that hour, my lord,
 They did not bless us with one happy word.
 I dare not call them fools; but this I think,
 When they are thirsty, fools would fain have drink.

BIRON

This jest is dry to me. Fair gentle sweet,
 Your wit makes wise things foolish: when we greet,
 With eyes best seeing, heaven's fiery eye,
 By light we lose light: your capacity
 Is of that nature that to your huge store
 Wise things seem foolish and rich things but poor.

ROSALINE

This proves you wise and rich, for in my eye,--

BIRON

I am a fool, and full of poverty.

ROSALINE

But that you take what doth to you belong,
It were a fault to snatch words from my tongue.

BIRON

O, I am yours, and all that I possess!

ROSALINE

All the fool mine?

BIRON

I cannot give you less.

ROSALINE

Which of the vizards was it that you wore?

BIRON

Where? when? what vizard? why demand you this?

ROSALINE

There, then, that vizard; that superfluous case
That hid the worse and show'd the better face.

FERDINAND

We are descrided; they'll mock us now downright.

DUMAIN

Let us confess and turn it to a jest.

PRINCESS

Amazed, my lord? why looks your highness sad?

ROSALINE

Help, hold his brows! he'll swoon! Why look you pale?
Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy.

(cont'd)

BIRON

Our states are forfeit: seek not to undo us.

ROSALINE

It is not so; for how can this be true,
That you stand forfeit, being those that sue?

BIRON

Peace! for I will not have to do with you.

ROSALINE

Nor shall not, if I do as I intend.

BIRON

Speak for yourselves; my wit is at an end.

FERDINAND

Teach us, sweet madam, for our rude transgression
Some fair excuse.

PRINCESS

The fairest is confession.
Were not you here but even now disguised?

FERDINAND

Madam, I was.

PRINCESS

And were you well advised?

FERDINAND

I was, fair madam.

PRINCESS

When you then were here,
What did you whisper in your lady's ear?

FERDINAND

That more than all the world I did respect her.

PRINCESS

When she shall challenge this, you will reject her.

FERDINAND

Upon mine honour, no.

PRINCESS

Peace, peace! forbear:
Your oath once broke, you force not to forswear.

FERDINAND

Despise me, when I break this oath of mine.

PRINCESS

I will: and therefore keep it. Rosaline,
What did the Russian whisper in your ear?

ROSALINE

Madam, he swore that he did hold me dear
As precious eyesight, and did value me
Above this world; adding thereto moreover
That he would wed me, or else die my lover.

PRINCESS

God give thee joy of him! the noble lord
Most honourably doth unhold his word.

FERDINAND

What mean you, madam? by my life, my troth,
 I never swore this lady such an oath.

ROSALINE

By heaven, you did; and to confirm it plain,
 You gave me this: but take it, sir, again.

FERDINAND

My faith and this the princess I did give:
 I knew her by this jewel on her sleeve.

PRINCESS

Pardon me, sir, this jewel did she wear;
 And Lord Biron, I thank him, is my dear.
 What, will you have me, or your pearl again?

BIRON

Neither of either; I remit both twain.
 I see the trick on't: here was a consent,
 Knowing beforehand of our merriment,
 To dash it like a Christmas comedy:
 Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany,
 Some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some Dick,
 That smiles his cheek in years and knows the trick
 To make my lady laugh when she's disposed,
 Told our intents before; which once disclosed,
 The ladies did change favours: and then we,
 Following the signs, woo'd but the sign of she.
 Now, to our perjury to add more terror,
 We are again forsworn, in will and error.

Enter COSTARD

Welcome, pure wit! thou partest a fair fray.

COSTARD

(To FERDINAND)
 O Lord, sir, I would know
 Whether the Nine Worthies shall come in or no.

FERDINAND

What, is there but you?

COSTARD

Yes, sir; but it is vara fine,
 For every I pursents Nine.

FERDINAND

And one times nine is nine.

COSTARD

Not so, sir; under correction, sir; I hope it is not
 so.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COSTARD (cont'd)

You cannot beg us, sir, I can assure you, sir we know what we know:
I hope, sir, one times nine, sir,--

DUMAIN

Is not nine?

COSTARD

Under correction, sir, we know whereuntil it doth amount.

BIRON

By Jove, I always took one nine for nine.

COSTARD

O Lord, sir, it were pity you should get your living by reckoning, sir.

LONGAVILLE

How much is it?

COSTARD

O Lord, sir, the party himself, the actor, sir, will show whereuntil it doth amount: for mine own part, I am, as they say, but to perfect one man in one poor man.

FERDINAND

Art thou nine of the Worthies?

COSTARD

I know not the degree of the Worthy, but I am to stand for them.

BIRON

Go, bid prepare.

COSTARD

We will turn it finely off, sir; we will take some care.

Exit COSTARD

FERDINAND

Biron, he will shame us: let him not approach.

BIRON

We are shame-proof, my lord: and tis some policy To have one show worse than the king's and his company.

FERDINAND

I say he shall not come.

PRINCESS

Nay, my good lord, let me o'errule you now:
That sport best pleases that doth least know how:
Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
Dies in the zeal of that which it presents:
His form confounded makes most form in mirth,
When great things labouring perish in their birth.

LONGAVILLE

A right description of our sport, my lord.

DUMAIN

Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. He
presents Hector of Troy; Pompey the
Great; Alexander; Hercules; Judas Maccabaeus: And if
these four Worthies in their first show thrive,
He will change habits again, and present the other
five.

BIRON

There is five in the first show.

FERDINAND

You are deceived; 'tis not so.

BIRON

The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool
and the swain:--
Abate throw at novum, and the whole world again
Cannot pick out five such, take each one in his vein.

FERDINAND

The ship is under sail, and here she comes amain.

Enter COSTARD, for Pompey

COSTARD

I Pompey am,--

BOYET

You lie, you are not he.

COSTARD

I Pompey am,--

BOYET

With libbard's head on knee.

BIRON

Well said, old mocker: I must needs be friends with thee.

COSTARD

I Pompey am, Pompey surnamed the Big--

FERDINAND

The Great.

COSTARD

It is, 'Great,' sir:--
Pompey surnamed the Great;
That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make
my foe to sweat:
And travelling along this coast, I here am come by
chance,
And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of
France,
If your ladyship would say, 'Thanks, Pompey,' I had
done.

PRINCESS

Great thanks, great Pompey.

COSTARD

'Tis not so much worth; but I hope I was perfect: I
made a little fault in 'Great.'

Exit COSTARD

ROSALINE

My hat to a halfpenny, Pompey proves the best Worthy.

Enter COSTARD, for Alexander

COSTARD

When in the world I lived, I was the world's
commander;
By east, west, north, and south, I spread my
conquering might:
My scutcheon plain declares that I am Alisander,--

LONGAVILLE

Your nose says, no, you are not for it stands too
right.

MARIA

Your nose smells 'no' in this, most tender-smelling
knight.

PRINCESS

The conqueror is dismay'd. Proceed, good Alexander.

COSTARD

When in the world I lived, I was the world's
commander,--

ROSALINE

Most true, 'tis right; you were so, Alisander.

BIRON

Pompey the Great,--

COSTARD

Your servant, and Costard.

BIRON

Take away the conqueror, take away Alisander.

COSTARD

O, sir, you have overthrown
Alisander the
conqueror! But there are
Worthies
a-coming will speak their mind in some other
sort. Great Hercules is presented,
Whose club kill'd Cerberus, that three-headed canis;
And when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp,
Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus.
Judas I am,--

DUMAIN

A Judas!

COSTARD

Not Iscariot, sir.
Judas I am, ycliped Maccabaeus.

KATHARINE

Judas Maccabaeus clipt is plain Judas.

ROSALINE

A kissing traitor. How art thou proved Judas?

COSTARD

Judas I am,--

BIRON

The more shame for you, Judas.

COSTARD

What mean you, sir?

BOYET

To make Judas hang himself.

COSTARD

Begin, madame; you are my elder.

BIRON

Well followed: Judas was hanged on an elder.

COSTARD

I will not be put out of countenance.

BOYET

Because thou hast no face.

COSTARD

What is this?

KATHARINE

A cittern-head.

DUMAIN

The head of a bodkin.

MARIA

A Death's face in a ring.

LONGAVILLE

The face of an old Roman coin, scarce seen.

(cont'd)
BIRON

And now forward; for we have put thee in countenance.

COSTARD

You have put me out of countenance.

ROSALINE

False; we have given thee faces.

COSTARD

But you have out-faced them all.

BOYET

Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go.

And so adieu, sweet Jude! nay, why dost thou stay?

DUMAIN

For the latter end of his name.

BIRON

For the ass to the Jude; give it him:--Jud-as, away!

COSTARD

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

BOYET

A light for Monsieur Judas! it grows dark, he may stumble.

COSTARD exits

PRINCESS

Alas, poor Maccabaeus, how hath he been baited!

Enter COSTARD, for Hector

BIRON

Hide thy head, Achilles: here comes Hector in arms.

BOYET

But is this Hector?

FERDINAND

I think Hector was not so clean-timbered.

LONGAVILLE

His leg is too big for Hector's.

MARIA

More calf, certain.

DUMAIN

This cannot be Hector.

COSTARD

The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,
Gave Hector a gift,--

KATHARINE

A gilt nutmeg.

BIRON

A lemon.

LONGAVILLE

Stuck with cloves.

MARIA

No, cloven.

COSTARD

Peace!--

The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty
Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion;
A man so breathed, that certain he would fight; yea
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COSTARD (cont'd)

From morn till night, out of his pavilion.
I am that flower,--

DUMAIN

That mint.

LONGAVILLE

That columbine.

COSTARD

Sweet royalty, bestow on me the sense of hearing.

PRINCESS

Speak, brave Hector: we are much delighted.

COSTARD

I do adore thy sweet grace's slipper.

BOYET

[Aside to BIRON] Loves her by the foot,--

BIRON

[Aside to BOYET] He may not by the yard.

Enter MESSENGER

MESSENGER

God save you, madam!

PRINCESS

Welcome, Messenger;
But that thou interrupt'st our merriment.

MESSENGER

I am sorry, madam; for the news I bring
Is heavy in my tongue. The king your father--

PRINCESS

Dead, for my life!

MESSENGER

Even so; my tale is told.

MESSENGER exits

BIRON

To COSTARD

Worthies, away! the scene begins to cloud.

COSTARD

For mine own part, I breathe free breath. I have
seen the day of wrong through the little hole of
discretion, and I will right myself like a soldier.

Exeunt COSTARD

FERDINAND

How fares your majesty?

PRINCESS

Boyet, prepare; I will away tonight.

FERDINAND

Madam, not so; I do beseech you, stay.

PRINCESS

Prepare, I say. I thank you, gracious lords,
For all your fair endeavors; and entreat,
Out of a new-sad soul, that you vouchsafe
In your rich wisdom to excuse or hide
The liberal opposition of our spirits,
If over-boldly we have borne ourselves
In the converse of breath: your gentleness
Was guilty of it. Farewell worthy lord!
A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue:
Excuse me so, coming too short of thanks
For my great suit so easily obtain'd.

FERDINAND

The extreme parts of time extremely forms
All causes to the purpose of his speed,
And often at his very loose decides
That which long process could not arbitrate:
And though the mourning brow of progeny
Forbid the smiling courtesy of love
The holy suit which fain it would convince,
Yet, since love's argument was first on foot,
Let not the cloud of sorrow justle it
From what it purposed; since, to wail friends lost
Is not by much so wholesome-profitable
As to rejoice at friends but newly found.

PRINCESS

I understand you not: my griefs are double.

BIRON

Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief;
And by these badges understand the king.
For your fair sakes have we neglected time,
Play'd foul play with our oaths: your beauty, ladies,
Hath much deform'd us, fashioning our humours
Even to the opposed end of our intents:
And what in us hath seem'd ridiculous,--

PRINCESS

We have received your letters full of love;
 Your favours, the ambassadors of love;
 And, in our maiden council, rated them
 At courtship, pleasant jest and courtesy,
 As bombast and as lining to the time:
 But more devout than this in our respects
 Have we not been; and therefore met your loves
 In their own fashion, like a merriment.

DUMAIN

Our letters, madam, show'd much more than jest.

LONGAVILLE

So did our looks.

ROSALINE

We did not quote them so.

FERDINAND

Now, at the latest minute of the hour,
 Grant us your loves.

PRINCESS

A time, methinks, too short
 To make a world-without-end bargain in.
 No, no, my lord, your grace is perjured much,
 Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this:
 If for my love, as there is no such cause,
 You will do aught, this shall you do for me:
 Your oath I will not trust; but go with speed
 To some forlorn and naked hermitage,
 Remote from all the pleasures of the world;
 There stay until the twelve celestial signs
 Have brought about the annual reckoning.
 If this austere insociable life
 Change not your offer made in heat of blood;
 If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds
 Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love,
 But that it bear this trial and last love;
 Then, at the expiration of the year,
 Come challenge me, challenge me by these deserts,
 And, by this virgin palm now kissing thine
 I will be thine; and till that instant shut
 My woeful self up in a mourning house,
 Raining the tears of lamentation
 For the remembrance of my father's death.
 If this thou do deny, let our hands part,
 Neither entitled in the other's heart.

FERDINAND

If this, or more than this, I would deny,
 To flatter up these powers of mine with rest,

(MORE)

FERDINAND (cont'd)

The sudden hand of death close up mine eye!
Hence ever then my heart is in thy breast.

DUMAIN

But what to me, my love? but what to me? A wife?

KATHARINE

Not so, my lord; a twelvemonth and a day
I'll mark no words that smooth-faced wooers say:
Come when the king doth to my lady come;
Then, if I have much love, I'll give you some.

DUMAIN

I'll serve thee true and faithfully till then.

KATHARINE

Yet swear not, lest ye be forsworn again.

LONGAVILLE

What says Maria?

MARIA

At the twelvemonth's end
I'll change my black gown for a faithful friend.

LONGAVILLE

I'll stay with patience; but the time is long.

MARIA

The liker you; few taller are so young.

BIRON

Studies my lady? mistress, look on me;
Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,
What humble suit attends thy answer there:
Impose some service on me for thy love.

ROSALINE

Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron,
Before I saw you; and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit.
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And therewithal to win me, if you please,
Without the which I am not to be won,
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavor of your wit
To enforce the pained impotent to smile.

BIRON

To move wild laughter in the throat of death?
 It cannot be; it is impossible:
 Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.

ROSALINE

Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,
 Whose influence is begot of that loose grace
 Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools:
 A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
 Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
 Of him that makes it: then, if sickly ears,
 Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
 Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
 And I will have you and that fault withal;
 But if they will not, throw away that spirit,
 And I shall find you empty of that fault,
 Right joyful of your reformation.

BIRON

A twelvemonth! well; befall what will befall,
 I'll jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.

PRINCESS

[To FERDINAND] Ay, sweet my lord; and so I take my leave.

FERDINAND

No, madam; we will bring you on your way.

BIRON

Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
 Jack hath not Jill: these ladies' courtesy
 Might well have made our sport a comedy.

FERDINAND

Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,
 And then 'twill end.

BIRON

That's too long for a play.

Re-enter COSTARD

COSTARD

Sweet majesty, vouchsafe me,--

PRINCESS

Was not that Hector?

FERDINAND

The worthy knight of Troy.

COSTARD

I will kiss thy royal finger, and take leave. I am a votary; I have vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the plough for her sweet love three years. But, most esteemed greatness, will you hear the dialogue that I have compiled in praise of the owl and the cuckoo? It should have followed in the end of our show.

PRINCESS

Call it forth quickly; we will do so.

COSTARD

When daisies pied and violets blue
 And lady-smocks all silver-white
 And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
 Do paint the meadows with delight,
 The cuckoo then, on every tree,
 Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo;
 Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
 Unpleasing to a married ear!
 When shepherds pipe on oaten straws
 And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
 When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
 And maidens bleach their summer smocks
 The cuckoo then, on every tree,
 Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo;
 Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
 Unpleasing to a married ear!
 When icicles hang by the wall
 And Dick the shepherd blows his nail
 And Tom bears logs into the hall
 And milk comes frozen home in pail,
 When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;
 Tu-who, a merry note,
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.
 When all aloud the wind doth blow
 And coughing drowns the parson's saw
 And birds sit brooding in the snow
 And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
 When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;
 Tu-who, a merry note,
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

PRINCESS

The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo. You that way: we this way.

Exeunt ALL