

William Shakespeare

ENJOY SHAKESPEARE

Sampler



Verse Translations
by
Kent Richmond

Romeo and Juliet



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Scene Three. Friar Lawrence's Cell

[Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE with a basket]

FRIAR LAWRENCE

The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
 Slicing the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
 And mottled darkness like a drunkard reels
 From daylight's path and Titan's fiery wheels.³
 Before the sun can raise its burning eye, 5
 To cheer the day and drink the night's dew dry,
 I must fill up this wicker crate of ours
 With toxic weeds and precious-nectared flowers.
 The earth, our natural mother, is a tomb;
 What is her burying ground serves as her womb; 10
 And from her womb come children of all kinds,
 All sucking from her natural breast one finds,
 Many with many powers excellent,
 Not one without one, yet all different.
 Each plant and herb and stone, innate in it, 15
 There lies some rich medicinal benefit.
 For on this earth the vilest things that live
 Add to the earth some special good they give;
 And every good when stretched past proper use,
 Rejects its nature, stumbling on abuse. 20
 A virtue turns to vice, when misapplied;
 Acts born of vice are sometimes dignified.

[Enter ROMEO]

Within the infant bud of this small flower
 Resides a poison and a healing power:
 If it is sniffed, one sense is overjoyed; 25
 If tasted, then all senses are destroyed.
 These two opposing kings contest this place
 In man as well as herbs—brute will and grace;
 And anywhere the worst comes out on top,
 The canker worm will soon wipe out the crop. 30

ROMEO

Good morning, father!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Benedicite.

What early tongue's so sweetly greeting me?

Young man, it indicates a troubled head

To say goodbye this early to your bed.

Unease stands watch in every old man's eye, 35

And where it beds down sleep will never lie;

But where an unbruised youth with unstuffed brain

Plops down his limbs, there golden sleep will reign.

And since you're up so early, I attest

Some turbulence in you disturbed your rest; 40

If that's not so, then now I've guessed it right:

Our Romeo has not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO

The last is true. A sweeter peace was mine.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

God pardon sin! Were you with Rosaline?

ROMEO

With Rosaline, my holy father? No. 45

I have forgot that name, and all its woe.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

That's good my son. But then where have you been?

ROMEO

I'll tell you—you won't need to ask again.

I have been feasting with my enemy,

Where one, all of a sudden, wounded me 50

Whom I have wounded too. What we endure,

Your holy medicine will surely cure.

I bear no hatred, blessed man—Oh, no—

For my petition likewise aids my foe.

70 • Romeo and Juliet**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

Speak plainly, son, without circumlocution—
Puzzling confession, puzzling absolution. 55

ROMEO

The plain truth is my dear heart's love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.
As mine is set on hers, hers is on mine,
And all is joined, save what you must combine 60
By holy marriage. When, and where, and how
We met and courted, and exchanged our vow,
I'll tell you as we go, but this I pray,
That you'll consent to marry us today.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here! 65
Is Rosaline, whom you just loved so dear,
So quickly cast aside? Young men's love lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria, think of all the brine
That rinsed your sallow cheeks for Rosaline! 70
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To marinate a love it did not taste!
The sun has not yet cleared away your sighs,
Your frown still glares into my ancient eyes.
Look there, right on your face I see the streaks 75
Of some old tears still not washed off your cheeks.
If you are you, and your grief's genuine
You and your grief were meant for Rosaline.
Could you have changed? Repeat this maxim then:
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men. 80

ROMEO

For loving Rosaline, a reprimand.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

For doting, not for loving—understand.

ROMEO

And told to bury love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Not in a tomb,
To toss out one, so others will have room.

ROMEO

Don't scold me, please. The one I love, you see, 85
Gives love for love and also favors me,
Not like the other one.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

She knew too well
You cite your love by rote, yet cannot spell.
But come, my wavering one, let's work on this.
There is one reason why I should assist, 90
For this alliance may turn out to be
A means to change discord to harmony.

ROMEO

Then let us hurry. There's no time to waste.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Wisely, and slow. I've stumbled when I've raced.

[Exit]

Scene Four. A Street

[Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO]

MERCUTIO

Where the devil could this Romeo be?
Did he go home last night?

BENVOLIO

Not to his father's. I spoke with his servant.

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MERCUTIO

Why, it's that pale, hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline.
She torments him so much he'll soon go mad. 5

BENVOLIO

Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,
Has sent a letter to his father's house.

MERCUTIO

A challenge, I am sure.

BENVOLIO

Romeo will answer it.

MERCUTIO

Any man that can write can answer a letter. 10

BENVOLIO

No, he will answer the letter's master, daring him now
that he's dared.

MERCUTIO

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! Stabbed by a pale
wench's black eye, shot through the ear with a love song,
his heart's bull's-eye cleft by the blind bow-boy's barbed 15
shaft. Is he the man to take on Tybalt?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt? My kitten's named King Tybalt.

MERCUTIO

He's more than a prince of kittens, I tell you—an ever-
fearless ensign of fencing etiquette. He fights as you
might finger a flute—keeps time, distance, and rhythm; a 20
sixteenth note rest, then a grace note—one, two, the third
goes in your breast—the very butcher of a silk button, a
“duelettante”, yes a “duelettante”; a gentleman of the very
best school, provoked by insult and honor. [acts out dueling
moves] Ah, the immortal *passado*! The *punto reverso*! The 25
hay—

BENVOLIO

The what?

MERCUTIO

A pox on these goofy, lipping, affected fops, these fine-tuners of fancy phrases! What's wrong with saying "a very good sword! A very tall man! A very good whore!" Isn't it something to lament, old man, that we are afflicted with these alien flies, these fashion-mongers, these "oh, *pardon-moi's*," with their *bon* this and their *bon* that—sporting so many "*bons*" they can't fit comfortably in their old pants? O my bones, my bones.

[Enter ROMEO, still wearing his costume]

BENVOLIO

Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo!

MERCUTIO

Without his roe, I bet, like a dried up herring. O flesh, flesh, how fishified you look! Now he is floating in one of Petrarch's sonnets, whose love, compared to his lady, was just a kitchen wench—even if he was better at rhyming her with things; Venus, a vixen; Cleopatra, a party girl; Dido, debauched; Helen, a harlot, a blue eye or two, but nothing else worth mentioning. Signior Romeo, bon jour! A French hello for that French slip you're wearing. You sure gave us the slip last night.

ROMEO

Good morning to you both. What slip did I give you?

MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, the slip. Don't you get it?

ROMEO

Pardon me, Mercutio. I've been deeply engaged, and in such a case as mine a man may relax the rules of etiquette.

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MERCUTIO

I'd think a deep engagement such as yours might tighten 50
the hamstrings a bit.

ROMEO

I mean I was tied up.

MERCUTIO

Now you're getting it.

ROMEO

A polite way of putting it.

MERCUTIO

Yes, I am the very essence of politeness. 55

ROMEO

Essence as in aroma.

MERCUTIO

Right.

ROMEO

Well then, my shoes are very polite.

MERCUTIO

Well done. Let's keep up this banter until you've worn out
your shoes, which, judging by their flimsy soles, may wear 60
out before this joke does.

ROMEO

A flimsy joke, its sole lined only with silliness.

MERCUTIO

Be my second in this duel, Benvolio. My wit is fading.

ROMEO

More spur, more whip, or I'll claim victory.

MERCUTIO

No, if I follow your lead, this wild goose chase will do me in, 65
for you have more wild geese to chase in an ounce of your
mind, I am sure, than I have in all of mine. Has this goose
line caught me up to you?

ROMEO

A goose gets in its best digs when it's behind.

MERCUTIO

I will peck you on the cheek for that dig. 70

ROMEO

Please, no pecks from you, good goose.

MERCUTIO

Your wit's a very bitter apple; too sour for my taste.

ROMEO

But tasty when served with such a sweet goose.

MERCUTIO

Your wit's a scrap of cloth you stretch from inches into 75
yards.

ROMEO

Just enough to make a pillow case to stuff your feathers in
when I'm finished with you.

MERCUTIO

Now isn't this better than whining for love? You're sociable 80
again. Now you are Romeo; now you are what you are,
shaped by art as well as nature, for this drooling love is
like a big, slobbering idiot that runs back and forth looking
for a hole to shake his rattle in.

BENVOLIO

Stop there, stop there.

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MERCUTIO

Cut off my tale while it's down a hole?

BENVOLIO

Well, it's long enough as it is.

85

MERCUTIO

You're all mixed up. The whole of my tale, once it's reached, is that it gets no longer and is soon finished. I had no intention of dwelling there long.

ROMEO

Here's some ample apparel.

[Enter NURSE and PETER]

Sail, ho! Sail, ho!

90

MERCUTIO

No, two. One shirt, one skirt.

NURSE

Peter!

PETER (Servant of Juliet's nurse)

Coming.

NURSE

My fan, Peter.

MERCUTIO

Quick, Peter, to hide her face, for her fan's the fairer of the two.

95

NURSE

Good morning to you, gentlemen.

MERCUTIO

Good afternoon, fair gentlewoman.

NURSE

Is it afternoon?

MERCUTIO

Way past for you, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of the dial 100
is giving the finger to the twelve.

NURSE

Disgusting! What sort of man are you?

ROMEO

One, gentlewoman, made in God's image only to abuse
himself.

NURSE

That's the truth. "To abuse himself," indeed. Gentlemen, can 105
any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

ROMEO

I can tell you, but young Romeo will be older when you find
him than he was when you sought him. I am the youngest
with that name, for lack of a worse one.

NURSE

That's better. 110

MERCUTIO

Is a worse one better? Better think about it.

NURSE

If you are he, sir, I desire to confiscate with you.

BENVOLIO

She will "invitate" him to her party.

MERCUTIO

A tart, a tart, a tart! Tally ho!

ROMEO

What have you found? 115

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MERCUTIO

[sizing up NURSE] Not really a plum one, sir, unless by tart we mean a pastry, one a bit too old and moldy to sell.

[Sings]

An old stale tart,
Yes, an old stale tart,
In lean times may suffice 120
But a tart that's stale
And up for sale

Cannot be worth the price.

Romeo, let's go to your father's house? We'll have dinner there. 125

ROMEO

Go ahead. I'll follow.

MERCUTIO

Farewell, ancient lady. [singing] "Farewell, lady, lady, lady."

[Exit MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO]

NURSE

Tell me, sir, who is that smart-mouthed character who's so proud of his ribaldry? 130

ROMEO

A gentleman, nurse, who loves to hear himself talk and will say more in a minute than he could rise to defend in a month.

NURSE

If he says anything against me, I'll deflate him, even if he's harder than he looks, and there were twenty such rascals. 135
And if I cannot, I'll find some that can. Scurvy knave! I am not one of his floozies, one of his cutthroat tagalongs. [To PETER] And you just stand there and allow every knave to use me as he pleases!

PETER

I saw no man use you as he pleased. If I had, my weapon 140
 would quickly have been out, I guarantee you. I draw as
 soon as any other man, if I see an opportunity for a good
 scuffle, and if the law is on my side.

NURSE

Now, before God, I am so aroused that every part of me is
 throbbing. Scurvy knave! [to ROMEO] Please, sir, a word 145
 with you. As I tried to tell you, my young lady has requested
 me to look you up. What she told me to say I will keep to
 myself, but first let me tell you, if you lead her into a fool's
 paradise, as they say, it'd be a very gross kind of behavior,
 as they say. For the gentlewoman is young; and, therefore, 150
 if you double deal with her, it is truly a wicked thing to do
 to any gentlewoman, and very shameful treatment.

ROMEO

Nurse, convey my respects to your lady and mistress. I
 profess to you...

NURSE

[interrupts] A good man, and you can bet I will tell her 155
 that. Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman.

ROMEO

What will you tell her, nurse? You cut me off.

NURSE

I will tell her, sir, that you have professed, which, as I see
 it, is a gentlemanly offer.

ROMEO

Have her arrange this afternoon to make confession, 160
 And there she will in Friar Lawrence' cell
 Be blessed and married. This is for your help. [offers
 coins]

NURSE

No, truly, sir. Not a penny.

80 • Romeo and Juliet**ROMEO**

Come on. I must insist.

NURSE

This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there. 165

ROMEO

And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey-wall.
 My servant in an hour will contact you,
 And bring a ladder made from knotted rope
 To reach the highest mast of all my joy,
 My passage in the cover of the night. 170
 Farewell. Be true, and I'll reward your pains.
 Farewell. And give your mistress my regards.

NURSE

Now God in heaven bless you! Listen, sir.

ROMEO

What is it, my dear nurse?

NURSE

Is your man trustworthy? I've heard it said, 175
 Two can keep secrets, long as both are dead.

ROMEO

I promise you, my man's as true as steel.

NURSE

Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady.—Lord, Lord,
 when she was a little prattling thing—O, there was a
 nobleman in town, named Paris, who had staked her out, 180
 but she, good soul, would have been quicker to look at a
 toad, yes a toad, than look at him. I tease her sometimes,
 and tell her that Paris is the handsomest man, but I have
 you know, when I say that, she looks as pale as any sheet
 in the entire world. Don't rosemary and Romeo begin with 185
 the same letter?⁴

ROMEO

Yes, nurse; what of it? Both with R.

NURSE

You tease! “AAR” is what dogs say. No, I know they begin with some other letter, and she recites such a pretty abhorism about it, about you and rosemary, that it would 190 do you good to hear it.

ROMEO

Give your mistress my regards.

NURSE

Yes, a thousand times.

[Exit ROMEO]

Peter!

PETER

Coming.

195

NURSE

Peter, take my fan, and get moving.

[Exit NURSE and PETER]

Scene Five. Capulet’s Garden

[enter JULIET]

JULIET

The clock struck nine when I sent out the nurse.
In half an hour she promised to return.
Perhaps she could not meet him. That’s not so.
She moves so slow! Love’s envoys should be thoughts,



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Act Two

Scene One. A Courtyard in Macbeth's Castle

[Enter BANQUO, preceded by FLEANCE,
carrying a torch]

BANQUO

How long till morning, boy?

FLEANCE (Banquo's Son)

The moon is down. I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE

I think, it's later, sir.

BANQUO

Here, take my sword. [Hands FLEANCE his sword] The
night is cutting costs. 5

Its candles are all out. And hold this too. [hands FLEANCE
a small case]

Sleep's heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
Yet I can't rest. Merciful powers above,
Protect me from the horrid thoughts our minds
Give way to when we doze!—Give me my sword. 10

[Enter MACBETH, and a SERVANT with a torch]

Who's there?

42 • Macbeth

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet asleep? The king's in bed.
He's been extremely pleased and has bestowed
Some generous gifts on all your household staff. 15
This diamond's yours in recognition of
Your wife's kind hospitality, encased
In boundless gratitude. [hands MACBETH the case
FLEANCE is holding]

MACBETH

So short of time,
We were the prisoners of deficiency
When normally we freely serve.

BANQUO

All's well. 20
I dreamt last night about those three weird sisters.
In your case, they seemed right.

MACBETH

They don't concern me.
Yet, when we find an hour or so to speak,
Let's spend it sharing thoughts about these matters,
If you will spare the time.

BANQUO

At your kind pleasure. 25

MACBETH

If you embrace my interests—when it's time,
There will be honors for you.

BANQUO

As long as I
Lose none in seeking more, but always keep
My conscious free and my allegiance clear,
Then I will follow.

MACBETH

In the meantime rest!

30

BANQUO

Thanks, sir. You do that to!

[Exit BANQUO and FLEANCE]

MACBETHGo tell your mistress, when my drink is ready,
To ring the bell. Then you may go to bed.

[Exit SERVANT]

Is this a dagger that I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Here, let me clutch you. 35
I do not have you, yet I see you still.
Are you not, fatal vision, evident
To touch as well as sight? Or are you but
A dagger in my mind, a false illusion,
Emerging from an overheated brain? 40
And yet this form looks just as tangible
As this one I now draw. [draws his dagger]
You guide me down the path that I was going
And are the instrument I was to use.
My eyes are either fools or worth more than 45
My other senses. I can see you still,
And on the blade and hilt are clots of blood,
Which were not there before.—There's no such thing.
It is this bloody business which has done
This to my eyes. Across the world's dark half, 50
Nature seems dead, encased in sleep, deceived
By wicked dreams. The sorcerer's goddess Hecate
Receives the witches' offering, and gaunt Murder,
Alerted by his sentinel, the wolf,
Its howl his timepiece, at a stealthy pace, 55
Moves ghostlike, with a rapist's wary stride,
In on his prey. O, firm and stable earth,
Don't hear my steps, or how they walk, for fear
These stones of yours will leak my whereabouts

44 • Macbeth

And break the ghastly silence of this hour, 60
 Which suits this deed. While I make threats, he lives.
 Cold wind to cool hot deeds is all talk gives.

[A bell chimes]

I'll go, and then it's done. That chime's my signal.
 Don't hear it, Duncan, for it is the bell
 That summons you to heaven or to hell.

[Exit]

Scene Two. Inside Macbeth's Castle

[Enter LADY MACBETH]

LADY MACBETH

That which has made them drunk has made me bold.
 What's doused their flame has brought me fire.—What?—
 Quiet!

An owl just screeched, the bell for the condemned,
 The harshest of good nights. He's doing it.
 The doors are open, and the stuffed attendants 5
 Scoff at their job with snores. I've drugged their
 nightcaps,
 So nature's forces battle here to see
 If they will live or die.

[MACBETH enters through the open door]

MACBETH

[from beyond the door] Who's there?—What's that?

LADY MACBETH

Oh, no! I am afraid they've woken up
 And it's not done. Attempt without the deed 10
 Will wreck us.—Listen!—I laid out their daggers.

He couldn't miss them.—Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I would have done it.
My husband?

[Enter MACBETH, holding bloody daggers]

MACBETH

I've done the deed. Did you hear any noise?

15

LADY MACBETH

I heard the owl screech and the crickets cry.
You did not speak?

MACBETH

When?

LADY MACBETH

Now.

MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

Yes.

MACBETH

Wait!—The next room, who's in it?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

[Looking at his hands] This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

20

MACBETH

One did laugh in his sleep, and one cried, "Murder!"
Enough to wake each other. I froze and listened,

46 • Macbeth

But then they said their prayers, and settled down
And fell asleep.

LADY MACBETH

The two share the same room.

MACBETH

One cried, “God bless us!” The other said, “Amen.” 25
As if they’d seen me with these hangman’s hands.
Hearing their fear, I could not say “Amen,”
When they had said, “God bless us.”

LADY MACBETH

Don’t think too deeply.

MACBETH

But why could I not say the word “Amen?” 30
I need his blessing most, and yet “Amen”
Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH

We must not think about
These deeds this way, or it will drive us mad.

MACBETH

It seemed I heard a voice cry, “Sleep no more!
Macbeth has murdered sleep,”—yes, innocent sleep, 35
Sleep that rewinds unraveled threads of care,
The death of each day’s life, hard work’s warm bath,
Salve for hurt minds, and nature’s biggest course,
Chief nourishment in life’s feast.

LADY MACBETH

What do you mean? 40

MACBETH

Still it cried, “Sleep no more!” to all the house.
“Glamis has murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more,—Macbeth shall sleep no more!”

LADY MACBETH

And who cried out all this? Why, worthy thane,
 You will no doubt untwist your noble strength 45
 If you're this addle-brained.—Go get some water,
 And wash this filthy evidence off your hands.
 And why'd you bring these daggers from the room?
 They must stay there. Go take them back and smear
 Blood on the sleeping men.

MACBETH

I can't go back. 50
 I am afraid to think what I have done.
 I don't dare look.

LADY MACBETH

A weakening resolve!
 Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
 Are merely paintings. Only childish eyes
 Will fear the devil's picture. If there's blood, 55
 I'll bronze the faces of his servants with it—
 It must appear they're guilty.

[She exits. Knocking is heard]

MACBETH

What's that knocking?
 What's wrong with me, when every noise sends panic?
 What hands are these? Ha, they've plucked out my eyes!
 Could all of Neptune's ocean wash this blood 60
 Clean from my hand? No, this, my hand, would cause
 A multitude of seas to fleshify,
 Turning the green a single shade of red.

[Re-enter LADY MACBETH]

LADY MACBETH

My hands are now your color, but I'd be
 Ashamed to have a heart this white.

[Knocking is heard]

48 • Macbeth

There's knocking

65

At the south entrance. Let's go to our room.
A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy it all is! Your steadiness
Has now deserted you.

[Knocking is heard]



Hear that? More knocking.
 Put on your robe, so if we're called upon 70
 We'll look as if we've slept. Don't lose yourself
 In morbid thoughts.

MACBETH

I cannot face this deed and face myself.¹

[Knocking is heard]

Wake Duncan with your knocking! I wish you could!

[Exit]

Scene Three. Inside Macbeth's Castle.

[Enter a PORTER. Knocking is heard]

PORTER

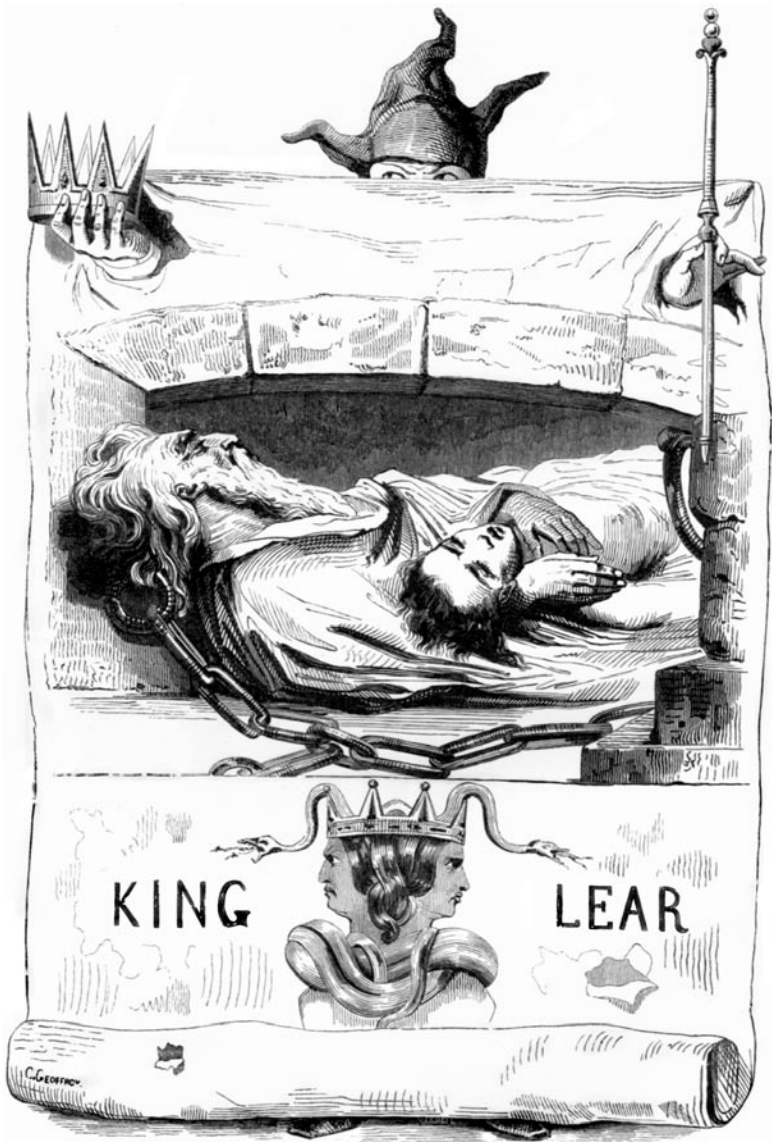
Wouldn't you know? Knocking! A doorman at the gates of hell would keep plenty busy turning the key.

[Knocking]

Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, in the name of Beelzebub? A farmer who hoarded his crops then hung himself when prices dropped? You've come to the right place. We 5
 have plenty of rags to wipe your brow, and here you'll need them.—

[Knocking]

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the name of...of...that other devil? Ah, here's a double talker, who could argue both sides of his case, commit all sorts of treachery in the name of 10
 God, yet not talk his way into heaven. Come on in, double talker.



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100 • King Lear

Scene Four. A Part of the Heath with a Shed

[The storm continues]
[Enter LEAR, KENT, and FOOL]

KENT (masquerading as Caius)

Here is the place, my lord. Please, my lord, enter.
The cruelty of the open air's too rough
For humans to endure.

LEAR

Let me alone.

KENT

Lord, enter here.

LEAR

You want to break my heart?

KENT

I'd rather break my own. My good lord, enter. 5

LEAR

You think it's bad that this combative storm
Can infiltrate our skin. That's true for you,
But when a greater malady is present,
The lesser's barely felt. You'd flee a bear,
But if a raging sea blocked your escape, 10
You'd turn and face its mouth. When the mind's calm,
The body's sensitive. The tempest in my mind
Has robbed my senses of all other feeling
Except this pounding.—Filial ingratitude!
Is it as if this mouth has bit this hand 15
That fed it? But my vengeance will be full.
No, I will weep no more. On such a night
To shut me out! Pour on. I will endure.
On such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!
Your kind, old father, whose large heart gave all... 20
O, that way madness lies. Let me flee that!
No more of that.

KENT

My good lord, enter here.

LEAR

Please, go on in. Look after your own needs.
 This tempest won't allow me time to ponder
 Those things that would hurt more. But I'll go in.— 25
 [to the FOOL] In, boy, go first—such houseless poverty—
 Yes, go on in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

[Exit FOOL]

Poor naked wretches, anywhere you are,
 Who bear the pelting of this pitiless storm,
 How will your roofless heads, and unfed frames, 30
 Your riddled, see-through raggedness, defend you
 In climates such as this? To this I gave
 Too little thought! Seek cures, you regal ones.
 Expose yourself to feel what wretches feel,
 By shedding what's superfluous to them, 35
 And prove the skies more just.

EDGAR

[Within] We're nine feet here! We're nine feet deep! Poor
 Tom!

[The FOOL runs out from the shed]

FOOL

Don't go in, uncle; there's a demon. Help me, help me!

KENT

Give me your hand. Who's there?

FOOL

A demon, a demon. He says his name's Poor Tom. 40

KENT

Who's doing all that mumbling in the straw?
 Come out.

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[Enter EDGAR, disguised as a madman]

EDGAR (masquerading as Poor Tom)

Go away! The foul fiend follows me!—[sings] “Through the sharp hawthorn the cold wind blows.”—

Hum! Go to your cold bed, and warm yourself. 45

LEAR

Did you give everything to your two daughters? And then you came to this?

EDGAR

Who gives anything to Poor Tom? Whom the foul fiend has led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire; who has laid knives 50
under his pillow and nooses in his seat, set rat poison next to his broth; made his heart bold enough to ride on a bay trotting horse over four-inch-wide bridges chasing down his own shadow for betraying him. God protect your good sense! Tom’s a-cold.—O, do de, do de, do de. God protect 55
you from whirlwinds, ominous stars, and hexes! Give Poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend torments. There I’ve got him now, [slapping his body]—and there—and there again, and there.

[The storm continues]

LEAR

Lord, have his daughters brought him to this state?— 60
Was nothing saved? You gave it all to them?

FOOL

Well, he hung onto his blanket, or we’d really be embarrassed.

LEAR

Let all impending plagues that hang above
To punish men’s misdeeds, land on your daughters! 65

KENT

He has no daughters, sir.

LEAR

Death, traitor! Nothing could reduce a being
 To such a depth except his unkind daughters.
 Is it the fashion for discarded fathers
 To take so little mercy on their flesh? [indicating Edgar's 70
 condition]
 Judicious punishment! It's flesh that spawned
 These daughters weaned on blood.

EDGAR

Wee-wee sat on Wee-wee bluff—alow, alow, loo-loo.

FOOL

This cold night will turn us all into fools and madmen.

EDGAR

Take heed of the foul fiend. Obey your parents, keep true 75
 to your word, never swear, do not commit acts with a man's
 devoted spouse, do not set your sweet heart on gaudy attire.
 Tom's a-cold.

LEAR

What were you before?

EDGAR

A loving servant, proud in heart and mind, who curled his 80
 hair; wore his mistress's glove in his cap; satisfied the lust
 in her heart, and committed the act in darkness with her,
 made as many promises as he had words, and broke them
 right in the sweet face of heaven; who in his dreams concocted 85
 lustful schemes and awoke to do them. Wine I loved
 deeply, dice dearly, and as for women out-haremed a sultan.
 False-hearted, all ears, bloody-handed; a hog in sloth, a fox
 in stealth, a wolf in greediness, a dog in madness, a lion
 in preying. Don't let the creaking shoes or rustling silks
 of a woman ensnare your poor heart. Keep your foot out of 90
 brothels, your hand out of petticoat pleats, your name out

104 • King Lear

of lender's books, and defy the foul fiend. [sings or chants]
 Through the hawthorn the cold wind still blows, saying
 zoom, moom, hey no nonny. [as if keeping a dog from bolt-
 ing] Dauphin, my boy, good boy, stay! Let him trot on by.⁴ 95

[Storm continues]

LEAR

Why, you'd be better off in your grave than to face with
 your uncovered body the ferocity of these skies. Is man no
 more than this? Consider him well.—You owe the worm no
 silk, the beast no leather, the sheep no wool, the whale no
 perfume. Ha! Here's three who are adulterated! You are 100
 the thing itself: unequipped man is no more than a poor,
 bare fork of an animal as you are. Off, off, you borrowed
 things! Come, undress me now.

[Tears off his clothes]

FOOL

Please, uncle, calm yourself. It's a nasty night for a swim.
 You see, a tiny fire in a barren field would be like an old 105
 lecher's heart—one small spark, but the rest of his body's
 cold.

[Enter GLOUCESTER with a torch]

Look, here comes a walking fire.

EDGAR

This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet. He begins at curfew
 and walks till midnight. He dims, blurs and squints your 110
 eyes, and causes the harelip, mildews the ripened wheat,
 and hurts the poor creatures of earth.

Three times St. Withold walked the moor
 He met the banshee and her four;
 Made her descend 115
 And pledge to mend
 Her ways, so witch, away!

KENT

How's your grace faring?

LEAR

Who's he?

KENT

Who's there? What is it you want? 120

GLOUCESTER

Who's there? What are your names?

EDGAR

Poor Tom, who eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the salamander; who, in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for his salad; dines on the old rat and the dog carcass, drinks 125
the green coating on standing pools; who is whipped from parish to parish, and punished in the stocks and imprisoned; a servant once allotted three suits for his back, six shirts for his body,

Horse to ride, and weapons to wear— 130

But mice and rats and very small deer,

Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware of my pursuer. Silence, changeling! Silence, you fiend!

GLOUCESTER

What, can't your grace find better company? 135

EDGAR

The prince of darkness is a gentleman: Captain Modo he's called, and Captain Mahu.

GLOUCESTER

Our flesh and blood, my lord, has grown so vile
That it now hates what spawned it.

EDGAR

Poor Tom's a-cold. 140

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GLOUCESTER

Come back with me. My loyalty to you
 Won't yield to all your daughters' harsh commands.
 Though their injunction is to bar my doors
 And let this vicious darkness bring you down,
 Still I have ventured all to search for you 145
 And take you where both fire and food is ready.

LEAR

First let me talk some with this scientist.
 What is the cause of thunder?

KENT

My good lord, take his offer; go into the house.

LEAR

I'll have a word first with this learned scholar. 150
 What do you study?

EDGAR

How to ward off the fiend and to kill vermin.

LEAR

Let me ask you one word in private.

KENT

Appeal to him once more to go, my lord.
 His mind's begun to fragment.

GLOUCESTER

Can you blame him? 155
 His daughters seek his death. Ah, that good Kent!
 He said it would be so, poor banished man!
 You say the king grows mad; I'll tell you, friend,
 I am almost mad myself. I had a son,
 Disowned now and condemned. He sought my death 160
 Just now, quite recently. I loved him, friend—
 No father's son is dearer. Truth be told,
 My mind is crazed with grief. O, what a night!
 I strongly urge your grace—

LEAR

I beg your pardon, sir.— 165
Noble philosopher, your company.

EDGAR

Tom's a-cold.

GLOUCESTER

In, fellow, there, into the shed. Keep warm.

LEAR

Let's all go in.

KENT

This way, my lord.

LEAR

With him.
I won't be kept from my philosopher. 170

KENT

Please humor him, lord. Let him bring the fellow.

GLOUCESTER

Bring him along.

KENT

Let's go, fellow. Come along with us.

LEAR

Come, wise man of Athens.

GLOUCESTER

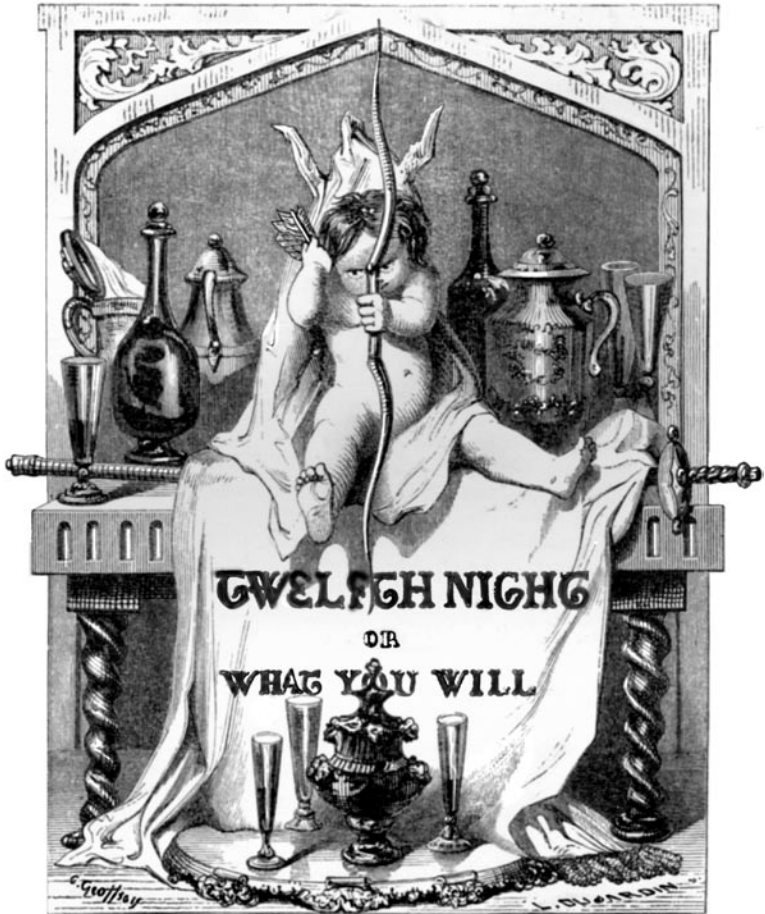
No words, no words. Hush. 175

EDGAR

To the dark tower young Roland came,
His motto always—Fie, foh, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman.

[Exit]





Act One

Scene One. A Chamber in the Duke's Palace

[Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and other LORDS;
MUSICIANS attending]

DUKE ORSINO (Duke of Illyria)

If music is the food of love, play on.
Fill me with such excess, that gorged on it,
My craving turns to sickness, and thus dies.
That song again! Its cadence fell away.
O, it came past my ear like the sweet sound, 5
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing in, giving fragrance! [pause for music]
Enough. No more.
It's not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love! So keen and ravenous,
That, even though your vast capacity 10
Lets in as much as seas, what enters there
Despite its value and the height it gains
Will sink into low price and worthlessness,
In but a minute! So rich in forms is love
That it alone incites such fantasy. 15

CURIO (a gentleman serving the Duke)

Lord, do you wish to hunt?

DUKE ORSINO

Hunt what?

CURIO

The hart.

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DUKE ORSINO

But Curio, I do, the noblest one.
 O, when my eyes first saw Olivia,
 It seemed she cleansed the air of all infection!
 That instant I was turned into a hart, 20
 And my desires, like cruel and vicious hounds,
 Have chased me since.

[Enter VALENTINE]

Come in! What news from her?

VALENTINE (a gentleman serving the Duke)

If you please lord, I'd rather not intrude;
 Her handmaid, though, has brought back this reply:
 The elements themselves above will not, 25
 Till seven summers pass, behold her face,
 But like a cloistered nun, she'll wear a veil
 And wash her chamber once a day with tears,
 Preserving in eye-burning brine the love
 Of her dead brother, which she wants kept fresh 30
 And lasting in her cheerless memory.

DUKE ORSINO

O, if her heart's so tender in construction
 That she could owe such love to just one brother,
 Think how she'll love, when Cupid's golden dart
 Kills off the flock of all desires that live 35
 In her but one; when liver, brain and heart,
 These sovereign thrones, and all her sweet perfection
 Are filled and ruled by just a single king!
 Lead me away now to sweet beds of flowers.
 Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers. 40

[Exit ALL]

Scene Two. The Sea-Coast

[Enter VIOLA, a CAPTAIN, and SAILORS]

VIOLA (a young woman shipwrecked in Illyria)

What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN (friend to Viola)

This is Illyria, lady.

VIOLA

What am I doing in Illyria?

When I must fear my brother dwells in heaven.

Perhaps he is not drowned. Is there a chance? 5

CAPTAIN

It is by chance alone that you were saved.

VIOLA

O my poor brother! And so by chance may he.

CAPTAIN

True, and to take some comfort in that chance,

Assure yourself, that when our ship broke up,
When you and those scant few we saved with you 10

Hung on our drifting boat, I saw your brother,

Cool-headed though in peril, bind himself,

Courage and hope both serving as his guide,

To a strong mast that floated on the sea,

Where, as if riding on a dolphin's back, 15

I saw him hold himself above the waves

So long as I could see.

VIOLA

For saying so, here's gold.

My own escape allows me room to hope,

And your words furnish strength to my conviction 20

That he too lives. You know this country well?

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CAPTAIN

Ay, madam, well. For I was born and bred
Not three hours' journey from this very place.

VIOLA

Who governs here?

CAPTAIN

A noble duke, in character and name. 25

VIOLA

What is his name?

CAPTAIN

Orsino.

VIOLA

Orsino! Yes, my father spoke of him.
He was a bachelor then.

CAPTAIN

And should still be, though soon his state may change 30
For when I left this place a month ago,
I heard it whispered that (as you well know,
What nobles do becomes the rabble's prattle)
Orsino seeks the love of fair Olivia.

VIOLA

Who's she? 35

CAPTAIN

A virtuous lady, daughter of a count
Who died a year ago, and left his son
To serve as her protector, a dear brother,
Who also shortly died. To mourn his love,
They say, she has renounced the company 40
And sight of men.

VIOLA

If only I could serve her,
 And were not forced to lay bare to the world
 My social status till I can ensure
 The moment's ripe....

CAPTAIN

That's hard to navigate,
 She won't allow appeals of any kind, 45
 Not even from the duke.

VIOLA

I sense a decent man inside you, captain.
 And although nature often hides what's foul
 Behind a lovely wall, I can have faith
 That you, sir, have a mind that matches well 50
 This fair and outward character I see.
 So could you (and I'll pay you generously),
 Keep secret what I am, and help design
 Whatever manner of disguise will best
 Advance my plans. Yes, I will serve this duke. 55
 Present me there perhaps as a castrato.
 It may reward your pains, for I can sing
 And speak to him with many kinds of music
 To prove I can be worthy in his service.
 How will this end? With time I cast my lot. 60
 Your perfect silence will preserve my plot.

CAPTAIN

You be the eunuch, silent I will be.
 If my tongue blabs, then let my eyes not see.

VIOLA

I thank you. Now lead us there.

[Exit ALL]

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Scene Three. Olivia's House

[Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA]

SIR TOBY (cousin to Olivia)

What the devil does my cousin mean by mourning her brother's death in this manner? I am sure that sorrow is an enemy to well-being.

MARIA (Olivia's waiting woman)

Good lord, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier at night. Your cousin, my lady, greatly objects to your unusual hours. 5

SIR TOBY

Well, as before, her objection has been duly recorded.

MARIA

Yes, but it's time for you to address and refine the excesses of your behavior.

SIR TOBY

Address! Refine! I'll address myself no finer than I am. These clothes are good enough to drink in, and so are 10
these boots. And if they are not, let them hang themselves by their own laces.

MARIA

This carousing and drinking will be your undoing. I heard my lady talking about it yesterday and about some foolish knight you dragged in one night to woo her. 15

SIR TOBY

Who? Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA

Yes, him.

SIR TOBY

He towers over every man in Illyria.

MARIA

What does his height matter?

SIR TOBY

Why, his income is three thousand gold coins a year. 20

MARIA

Yes, but his gold will be good as gone within a year, for he's a complete fool and spendthrift.

SIR TOBY

How dare you say that! He plays the bass fiddle and speaks three or four languages word for word by memory and has all the gifts and talents nature can bestow. 25

MARIA

Bestow indeed, upon a fool. For, besides being a fool, he's a natural quarreler; and if his talent as a coward did not balance his gift for quarrelling, the wisest among us believe he would soon have had the gift of a grave.

SIR TOBY

By this hand, those who say these things are scoundrels and... sub...tractors. Who are they? 30

MARIA

[mocking his malapropism] "Subtractors" who add that he gets drunk every night while in your company.

SIR TOBY

And drinking to the health of my cousin. I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria. 35
He's a coward and a knave who will not drink to my cousin till his brains spin around like a top. So there, wench. Castiliano vulgo! For here comes Sir Andrew Ague...face.

[Enter SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK]

SIR ANDREW (Sir Toby's companion)

Sir Toby Belch! Greetings, Sir Toby Belch!

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SIR TOBY

Sweet Sir Andrew!

40

SIR ANDREW

Bless you, fair chipmunk.

MARIA

And you too, sir.

SIR TOBY

[to SIR ANDREW] Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

SIR ANDREW

[to SIR TOBY] What do you mean?

SIR TOBY

[to SIR ANDREW] My cousin's chambermaid.

45

SIR ANDREW

Dear Miss Accost, may I make your acquaintance.

MARIA

My name is Mary, sir.

SIR ANDREW

Dearest Miss Mary Accost—

SIR TOBY

[to SIR ANDREW] You're confused, knight. "Accost" means engage her, tie up alongside her, board her, woo her, overwhelm her.

50

SIR ANDREW

[to SIR TOBY and motioning to the audience] Good lord, I cannot do that with her before this audience. Is that what "accost" means?

MARIA

I will leave you gentlemen to yourselves.

55

SIR TOBY

[to SIR ANDREW] If you let her walk off like that, Sir Andrew, you have no hope of ever drawing your sword again.

SIR ANDREW

If you leave like that, miss, I hope I never draw my sword again. Fair lady, do you think two fools have been placed in your hands? 60

MARIA

Sir, I have not taken you by the hand.

SIR ANDREW

By Golly, you will, and here's my hand.

MARIA

Now, sir, I'll form my opinion. [takes his hand] Why not bely your hand up to the bar and let it drink?

SIR ANDREW

Why, sweet lady? Your metaphor confuses me. 65

MARIA

[examining Sir Andrew's hand] It's parched, sir.

SIR ANDREW

Why, I hope so. Even a fool can keep his hands dry. So where's the humor?

MARIA

It's dry humor, sir.

SIR ANDREW

Are you full of such jokes? 70

MARIA

Correct, sir, I keep them at my finger tips. But "by golly," as soon as I release your hand, I run dry.

[Exit MARIA]

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SIR TOBY

O knight, you need a cup of sherry. When have I ever seen you laid so flat?

SIR ANDREW

Never in your life, I think—unless you’ve seen sherry lay me flat. Sometimes it seems I have no more brains than a civilian, or an ordinary man. You know I am a great eater of beef, and I believe it harms my intellect. 75

SIR TOBY

No question about it.

SIR ANDREW

And I thought that I’d swear it off. [pauses] I am going to ride home tomorrow, Sir Toby. 80

SIR TOBY

Pourquoi, my dear knight?

SIR ANDREW

What is “pourquoi”? Go or not go? I wish I had spent the time acquiring foreign tongues that I spent on fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting! If only I had pursued the arts! 85

SIR TOBY

With all those tongs, you could have curled your hair.

SIR ANDREW

Would that improve my hair?

SIR TOBY

No question. You can see that nature hasn’t curled it.

SIR ANDREW

But it’s attractive enough, isn’t it?

SIR TOBY

It’s excellent. It hangs like yarn on a mop, and I hope to see a hussy take it between her legs and scrub floors till none’s left. 90

SIR ANDREW

Yes, I'll go home tomorrow, Sir Toby. Your cousin will see no one. Or, if she will, it's four to one she won't see me. The duke himself is here to woo her.

95

SIR TOBY

She wants nothing of the duke. She'll accept no match above her rank in wealth, years, or intellect. I've heard her swear it. Tut, you are alive, man, so there's still hope.

SIR ANDREW

I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow with the strangest mind in the world. I take pleasure in plays, dances, and revelry, sometimes all at once.

100

SIR TOBY

Are you good at these diversions, knight?

SIR ANDREW

As good as any man in Illyria, whoever he may be, as long as he's not more skilled or more experienced.

SIR TOBY

How well do you dance a galliard, knight?

105

SIR ANDREW

Why, I caper, gambol, and leap with great relish.

SIR TOBY

Then I'll garnish my mutton with your capers and relish.

SIR ANDREW

And I think I can back-step as vigorously as any man in Illyria.

SIR TOBY

Why hide these things? Why cover these gifts with curtains? Are they likely to collect dust, like a lady's portrait? Why, you should waltz your way to church, and race home dancing a reel. My very walk would be a jig. And I would

110

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not so much as relieve myself without a curtsy. Now, you tell me, is this a world where you should hide your talents? 115
The excellent contour of your legs convinces me they must have been formed under the star of dance itself.

SIR ANDREW

Yes, they are strong and look appealing enough in a mouse-colored stocking. Shall we get on with some revelry?

SIR TOBY

What else would we do? Were we not born under the sign 120
of Taurus?

SIR ANDREW

Taurus! Now that controls ribs and hearts.

SIR TOBY

No, sir; it is legs and thighs. Let me see you leap. Ha! Higher! Ha, ha, excellent!

[Exit ALL]

Scene Four. The Duke's Palace

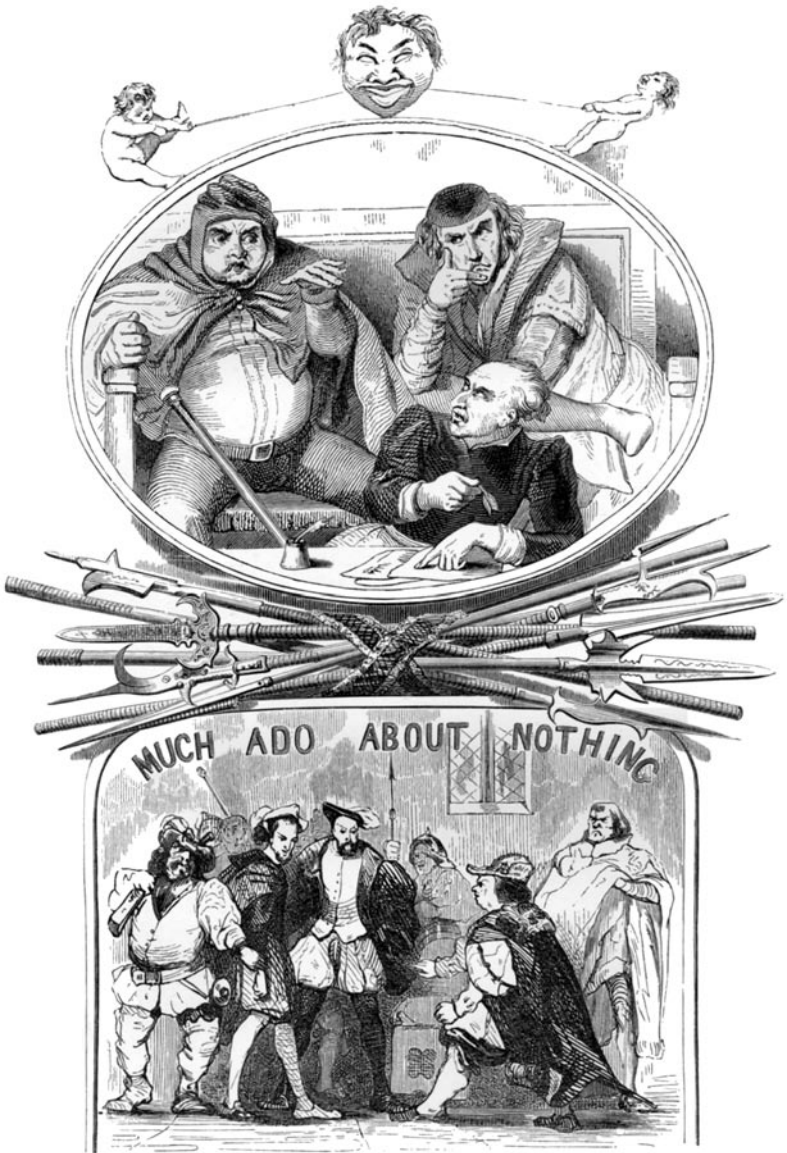
[Enter VALENTINE and VIOLA (in
man's attire as Cesario)]

VALENTINE

As long as the duke's high regard for you continues, Cesario, your standing here will likely improve. He has known you just three days, yet already you are no stranger here.

VIOLA (masquerading as Cesario)

You must distrust his moods or suspect I'll neglect my duty. Otherwise, why doubt that his fondness will continue. Is 5
he fickle, sir, in who he favors?



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Act One

Scene One. A Street in Messina

[Enter LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others, with
a MESSENGER]

LEONATO (Governor of Messina)

This letter tells me that Don Pedro of Aragon is coming to
Messina tonight.

MESSENGER (to Leonato)

He'll be here very soon. He was less than ten miles away
when I left him.

LEONATO

How many noblemen did you lose in this battle?

5

MESSENGER

Only a few of any rank, and none with a name.

LEONATO

A victory is twice as good when the victor brings home full
numbers. I see here that Don Pedro has bestowed many
honors on a young Florentine named Claudio.

MESSENGER

Much deserved on his part, and suitably rewarded by Don 10
Pedro. He has pushed himself way past what we demand for
one his age, performing in the likeness of a lamb the feats of
a lion. He has surely surpassed, indeed, more expectations
than you'd expect me to list.

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LEONATO

He has an uncle here in Messina who will be very glad to hear of this. 15

MESSENGER

I have already delivered letters to him, and he seems quite full of joy, so much so that his joy would seem stripped of all modesty were it not gowned in grief.

LEONATO

He started crying? 20

MESSENGER

In great profusion.

LEONATO

A tendency for overflowing tenderness. There are no faces more sincere than those washed in that way. Much better to weep in delight than to delight in weeping!

BEATRICE (Leonato's niece)

Tell me, has Signior Layemflatte returned from the wars, or no? 25

MESSENGER

I do not know him, lady. No one of any rank in the army has such a name.

LEONATO

Who are you asking about, niece?

HERO (Leonato's daughter)

My cousin's referring to Signior Benedick of Padua. 30

MESSENGER

Oh, he has returned, and as entertaining as ever.

BEATRICE

He once put up posters here in Messina and claimed his bow could outshoot the God of Love himself, so my uncle's

jester, reading this challenge, stood in for Cupid and beat him with a peashooter. Tell me, how many has he killed 35
and eaten in these wars? I'm sorry, just those he killed.
I'm the one who promised to eat anything he killed.

LEONATO

Really, niece, you pick on Signior Benedick too much, but he'll make meat of you, no doubt.

MESSENGER

He has served nobly, lady, in this war. 40

BEATRICE

You were served up stale food, and he helped you eat it. He is valiant when finishing off a platter; he has an excellent stomach for that.

MESSENGER

And a good soldier too, my lady.

BEATRICE

A good soldier to every lady, but how does he treat a lord? 45

MESSENGER

A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stuffed full of honorable virtues.

BEATRICE

I'll grant you that. He is no doubt a man stuffed full. As for the stuffing—well, we are all human.

LEONATO

You must not, sir, misunderstand my niece. There is a kind 50
of merry war between Signior Benedick and her. They never
meet without an exchange of verbal thrusts.

BEATRICE

The poor man. He gains nothing from it. In our last conflict, four-fifths of his brain went limping off, and now the whole man is governed by what's left. If he has brains enough 55

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to keep himself warm, that lifts him one rank above his horse, for that's the only wealth he has, to be recognized as a creature with some sense left. Who is his sidekick now? Every month he has a newly-sworn brother-in-arms.

MESSENGER

Is it possible?

60

BEATRICE

Certainly possible. His loyalty changes with the look of his hat, as fast as his tailor can fit one on his block.

MESSENGER

I see, lady, that the gentleman does not amount to much in your book.

BEATRICE

No. And if he did, I would burn my library. But tell me, who is his sidekick? Isn't there some young roughneck willing to journey with him to the devil?

65

MESSENGER

He is most often in the company of the noble Claudio.

BEATRICE

O Lord! He will hang onto him like a disease. He is more contagious than a plague, and the victim instantly goes mad. God help noble Claudio! If he has caught the Benedick flu, it will cost him a thousand pounds before he is cured.

70

MESSENGER

I hope to remain on your good side, lady.

BEATRICE

Do, good friend.

LEONATO

You will never catch this madness, niece.

75

BEATRICE

Not until we have a hot January.

MESSENGER

Don Pedro is approaching.

[Enter DON PEDRO, with CLAUDIO, BENEDICK,
DON JOHN, BALTHAZAR, and others]

DON PEDRO (Prince of Aragon)

Good Signior Leonato, are you here to greet those who trouble you? The current fashion is to avoid inconvenience, yet you embrace it. 80

LEONATO

Your Grace's presence is never any trouble. When trouble goes, comfort should remain, yet when you depart from me, sorrow remains behind, and happiness takes leave.

DON PEDRO

You welcome your burden too willingly. And this, I believe, is your daughter. 85

LEONATO

Her mother has told me so—many times.

BENEDICK (a gentleman from Padua)

Were you so in doubt that you had to ask her?

LEONATO

No, Signior Benedick, for you were still a child then.

DON PEDRO

There you are, Benedick. We can guess from this what kind of man you are. Truly the lady takes after her father.—Be 90
happy, lady, that you are like your honorable father.

[DON PEDRO and LEONATO step aside to talk]

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BENEDICK

If Signior Leonato were her father, she would not want his head on her shoulders for all Messina to see, despite its likeness.

BEATRICE

I'm surprised you bother talking, Signior Benedick. No one pays attention. 95

BENEDICK

Ah, dear Lady Disdain! Are you still alive?

BEATRICE

Is it possible "Disdain" would die on such a hearty diet as Signior Benedick metes out? Miss Courtesy herself would convert to Disdain if you were in her presence. 100

BENEDICK

Then Miss Courtesy's a turncoat. For it is certain I am loved by all the ladies, except for you, and I wish in my heart that I did not have a heart so closed, for the truth is I love none of them.

BEATRICE

A rare stroke of luck for women. Otherwise, they would be molested by a wicked suitor. I thank God, and my icy blood, that you and I are of one mind in that. I'd rather hear my dog bark at a crow than hear a man swear he loves me. 105

BENEDICK

May God forever keep your ladyship in that frame of mind and spare some poor gentleman, or whatever, the inevitable scratched face. 110

BEATRICE

Scratching couldn't make it worse if it were anything like yours.

BENEDICK

You must be good at training parrots.

BEATRICE

A bird with my tongue is better than a beast with yours. 115

BENEDICK

I wish my horse had the speed of your tongue and such endurance. In God's name, finish the race. I quit.

BEATRICE

You always end by throwing the rider. I've learned your tricks.

[DON PEDRO and others rejoin the conversation]

DON PEDRO

That sums it up, Leonato.—Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick—my dear friend Leonato has invited you all. I told him we will stay here at least a month, and he heartily prays that some matter will detain us longer. I can testify that these are not just empty words but come from his heart. 120

LEONATO

Your testimony, my lord, will not be proven false. [to DON JOHN] Let me welcome you, my lord. Since you have made peace with your brother, the prince, I owe you my respect. 125

DON JOHN (Don Pedro's half-brother)

Thank you. I'm a man of few words, but I thank you.

LEONATO

Would your grace please lead us out?

DON PEDRO

Your hand, Leonato. We will go together. 130

[Exit ALL but BENEDICK and CLAUDIO]

CLAUDIO (a lord from Florence)

Benedick, did you get a look at the daughter of Signior Leonato?