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## Dramatis Personae

- FERDINAND king of Navarre.
- BIRON, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN } lords attending on the King.

- BOYET, MERCADE } lords attending on the Princess of France.
- DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO a fantastical Spaniard.
- SIR NATHANIEL a curate.
- HOLOFERNES a schoolmaster.
- DULL a constable.
- COSTARD a clown.
- MOTH page to Armado.
- A Forester.
- The PRINCESS of France.
- ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE } ladies attending on the Princess.
- JAQUENETTA a country wench.
- Lords, Attendants, &c.

Scene: Navarre.

# Act 1

## 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;  
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.  
FERDINAND

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.  
FERDINAND

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.  
FERDINAND

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

Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding!  
LONGAVILLE

He weeds the corn and still lets grow the weeding.  
BIRON

The spring is near when green geese are a-breeding.  
DUMAIN

How follows that?  
BIRON

Fit in his place and time.  
DUMAIN

In reason nothing.  
BIRON

Something then in rhyme.  
FERDINAND

Biron is like an envious sneaping frost,  
That bites the first-born infants of the spring.  
BIRON

Well, say I am; why should proud summer boast  
Before the birds have any cause to sing?  
Why should I joy in any abortive birth?  
At Christmas I no more desire a rose  
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;  
But like of each thing that in season grows.  
So you, to study now it is too late,  
Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate.  
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?  
LONGAVILLE

Marry, that did I.  
BIRON

Sweet lord, and why?  
LONGAVILLE

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:

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?  
FERDINAND

Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted  
With a refined traveller of Spain;  
A man in all the world's new fashion planted,  
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;  
One whom the music of his own vain tongue  
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;  
A man of complements, whom right and wrong  
Have chose as umpire of their mutiny:  
This child of fancy, that Armado hight,  
For interim to our studies shall relate  
In high-born words the worth of many a knight  
From tawny Spain lost in the world's debate.  
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;  
But, I protest, I love to hear him lie  
And I will use him for my minstrelsy.  
BIRON

Armado is a most illustrious wight,  
A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.  
LONGAVILLE

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

Enter DULL with a letter, and COSTARD  
DULL

Which is the duke's own person?  
BIRON

This, fellow: what wouldst?

DULL

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

BIRON

This is he.

DULL

Signior Arme--Arme--commends you. There's villany  
abroad: this letter will tell you more.

COSTARD

Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me.

FERDINAND

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

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!

BIRON

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.

BIRON

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 taken 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.



BIRON

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 he say it is so, he is, 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 see 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 I 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,--  
COSTARD

With a wench.  
FERDINAND

[Reads]

'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet grace's officer, Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.'  
DULL

'Me, an't shall please you; I am Anthony Dull.  
FERDINAND

[Reads]

'For Jaquenetta,--so is the weaker vessel called which I apprehended with the aforesaid swain,--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.  
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'  
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 to this?  
COSTARD

Sir, I confess the wench.  
FERDINAND

Did you hear the proclamation?  
COSTARD

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

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.  
FERDINAND

Well, it was proclaimed 'damsel.'  
COSTARD

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

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

And Don Armado shall be your keeper.  
My Lord Biron, see him deliver'd o'er:  
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!

Exeunt

## Scene 2

The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit  
grows melancholy?  
MOTH

A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Why, sadness is one and the self-same thing, dear imp.  
MOTH

No, no; O Lord, sir, no.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

How canst thou part sadness and melancholy, my  
tender juvenal?  
MOTH

By a familiar demonstration of the working, my tough senior.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Why tough senior? why tough senior?  
MOTH

Why tender juvenal? why tender juvenal?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent epitheton  
appertaining to thy young days, which we may  
nominate tender.  
MOTH

And I, tough senior, as an appertinent title to your  
old time, which we may name tough.  
ARMADO

Pretty and apt.  
MOTH

How mean you, sir? I pretty, and my saying apt? or  
I apt, and my saying pretty?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Thou pretty, because little.

MOTH

Little pretty, because little. Wherefore apt?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

And therefore apt, because quick.  
MOTH

Speak you this in my praise, master?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

In thy condign praise.  
MOTH

I will praise an eel with the same praise.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

What, that an eel is ingenious?  
MOTH

That an eel is quick.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do say thou art quick in answers: thou heatest my blood.  
MOTH

I am answered, sir.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I love not to be crossed.  
MOTH

[Aside]

He speaks the mere contrary; crosses love not him.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I have promised to study three years with the duke.  
MOTH

You may do it in an hour, sir.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Impossible.  
MOTH

How many is one thrice told?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I am ill at reckoning; it fitteth the spirit of a tapster.  
MOTH

You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I confess both: they are both the varnish of a  
complete man.  
MOTH

Then, I am sure, you know how much the gross sum of  
deuce-ace amounts to.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

It doth amount to one more than two.  
MOTH

Which the base vulgar do call three.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

True.  
MOTH

Why, sir, is this such a piece of study? Now here  
is three studied, ere ye'll thrice wink: and how  
easy it is to put 'years' to the word 'three,' and  
study three years in two words, the dancing horse  
will tell you.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

A most fine figure!  
MOTH

To prove you a cipher.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will hereupon confess I am in love: and as it is  
base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a  
base wench. If drawing my sword against the humour  
of affection would deliver me from the reprobate  
thought of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and  
ransom him to any French courtier for a new-devised  
courtesy. I think scorn to sigh: methinks I should  
outswear Cupid. Comfort, me, boy: what great men  
have been in love?  
MOTH

Hercules, master.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Most sweet Hercules! More authority, dear boy, name  
more; and, sweet my child, let them be men of good  
repute and carriage.

MOTH

Samson, master: he was a man of good carriage, great carriage, for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter: and he was in love.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

O well-knit Samson! strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love too. Who was Samson's love, my dear Moth?

MOTH

A woman, master.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Of what complexion?

MOTH

Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Tell me precisely of what complexion.

MOTH

Of the sea-water green, sir.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Is that one of the four complexions?

MOTH

As I have read, sir; and the best of them too.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Green indeed is the colour of lovers; but to have a love of that colour, methinks Samson had small reason for it. He surely affected her for her wit.

MOTH

It was so, sir; for she had a green wit.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

My love is most immaculate white and red.

MOTH

Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under such colours.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Define, define, well-educated infant.

MOTH



My father's wit and my mother's tongue, assist me!  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet invocation of a child; most pretty and  
pathetical!  
MOTH

If she be made of white and red,  
Her faults will ne'er be known,  
For blushing cheeks by faults are bred  
And fears by pale white shown:  
Then if she fear, or be to blame,  
By this you shall not know,  
For still her cheeks possess the same  
Which native she doth owe.  
A dangerous rhyme, master, against the reason of  
white and red.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?  
MOTH

The world was very guilty of such a ballad some  
three ages since: but I think now 'tis not to be  
found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for  
the writing nor the tune.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will have that subject newly writ o'er, that I may  
example my digression by some mighty precedent.  
Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the  
park with the rational hind Costard: she deserves well.  
MOTH

[Aside]

To be whipped; and yet a better love than  
my master.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sing, boy; my spirit grows heavy in love.  
MOTH

And that's great marvel, loving a light wench.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I say, sing.  
MOTH

Forbear till this company be past.

Enter DULL, COSTARD, and JAQUENETTA  
DULL

Sir, the duke's pleasure is, that you keep Costard  
safe: and you must suffer him to take no delight  
nor no penance; but a' must fast three days a week.  
For this damsel, I must keep her at the park: she  
is allowed for the day-woman. Fare you well.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!  
JAQUENETTA

Man?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will visit thee at the lodge.  
JAQUENETTA

That's hereby.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I know where it is situate.  
JAQUENETTA

Lord, how wise you are!  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I will tell thee wonders.  
JAQUENETTA

With that face?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I love thee.  
JAQUENETTA

So I heard you say.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

And so, farewell.  
JAQUENETTA

Fair weather after you!  
DULL

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

Exeunt DULL and JAQUENETTA  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Villain, 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.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Thou shalt be heavily punished.  
COSTARD

I am more bound to you than your fellows, for they  
are but lightly rewarded.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Take away this villain; shut him up.  
MOTH

Come, you transgressing slave; away!  
COSTARD

Let me not be pent up, sir: I will fast, being loose.  
MOTH

No, sir; that were fast and loose: thou shalt to prison.  
COSTARD

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

What shall some see?  
COSTARD

Nay, nothing, Master Moth, 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.

Exeunt MOTH and COSTARD  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do affect the very ground, which is base, where  
her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which  
is basest, doth tread. I shall be forsworn, which  
is a great argument of falsehood, if I love. And  
how can that be true love which is falsely  
attempted? Love is a familiar; Love is a devil:  
there is no evil angel but Love. Yet was Samson so

tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was  
Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit.  
Cupid's butt-shaft is too hard for Hercules' club;  
and therefore too much odds for a Spaniard's rapier.  
The first and second cause will not serve my turn;  
the passado he respects not, the duello he regards  
not: his disgrace is to be called boy; but his  
glory is to subdue men. Adieu, valour! rust rapier!  
be still, drum! for your manager is in love; yea,  
he loveth. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme,  
for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit;  
write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio.

Exit

# Act 2

## Scene 1

The same.

Enter the PRINCESS of France, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, BOYET, Lords, and other Attendants

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

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

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,  
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?  
First Lord

Here comes Boyet.

Re-enter BOYET  
PRINCESS

Now, what admittance, lord?  
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, BIRON, and Attendants  
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.  
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 unseemingly 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  
BIRON

Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.  
ROSALINE

Pray you, do my commendations; I would be glad to see it.  
BIRON

I would you heard it groan.  
ROSALINE

Is the fool sick?  
BIRON

Sick at the heart.  
ROSALINE

Alack, let it blood.  
BIRON

Would that do it good?  
ROSALINE

My physic says 'ay.'  
BIRON

Will you prick't with your eye?  
ROSALINE

No point, with my knife.  
BIRON

Now, God save thy life!  
ROSALINE

And yours from long living!

BIRON

I cannot stay thanksgiving.

Retiring  
DUMAIN

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

The heir of Alencon, Katharine her name.  
DUMAIN

A gallant lady. Monsieur, 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, sir, whose daughter?  
BOYET

Her mother's, I have heard.  
LONGAVILLE

God's blessing on your beard!  
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, sir: adieu.

BOYET

Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you.

Exit BIRON

MARIA

That last is Biron, the merry madcap lord:

Not a word with him but a jest.

BOYET

And every jest but a word.

PRINCESS

It was well done of you to take him at his word.

BOYET

I was as willing to grapple as he was to board.

MARIA

Two hot sheeps, marry.

BOYET

And wherefore not ships?

No sheep, sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips.

MARIA

You sheep, and I pasture: shall that finish the jest?

BOYET

So you grant pasture for me.

Offering to kiss her

MARIA

Not so, gentle beast:

My lips are no common, though several they be.

BOYET

Belonging to whom?

MARIA

To my fortunes and me.

PRINCESS

Good wits will be jangling; but, gentles, agree:  
This civil war of wits were much better used  
On Navarre and his book-men; for here 'tis abused.

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

Your reason?

BOYET

Why, all his behaviors did make their retire  
To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire:  
His heart, like an agate, with your print impress'd,  
Proud with his form, in his eye pride express'd:  
His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,  
Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be;  
All senses to that sense did make their repair,  
To feel only looking on fairest of fair:  
Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,  
As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;  
Who, tendering their own worth from where they were glass'd,  
Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd:  
His face's own margent did quote such amazes  
That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.  
I'll give you Aquitaine and all that is his,  
An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.

PRINCESS

Come to our pavilion: Boyet is disposed.

BOYET

But to speak that in words which his eye hath  
disclosed.

I only have made a mouth of his eye,

By adding a tongue which I know will not lie.

ROSALINE

Thou art an old love-monger and speakest skilfully.

MARIA

He is Cupid's grandfather and learns news of him.

ROSALINE

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

BOYET

Do you hear, my mad wenches?

MARIA

No.

BOYET

What then, do you see?

ROSALINE

Ay, our way to be gone.

BOYET

You are too hard for me.

Exeunt

# Act 3

## Scene 1

The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Warble, child; make passionate my sense of hearing.

MOTH

Concolinel.

Singing

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet air! Go, tenderness of years; take this key,  
give enlargement to the swain, bring him festinately  
hither: I must employ him in a letter to my love.

MOTH

Master, will you win your love with a French brawl?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

How meanest thou? brawling in French?  
MOTH

No, my complete master: but to jig off a tune at  
the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humour  
it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and  
sing a note, sometime through the throat, as if you  
swallowed love with singing love, sometime through  
the nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling  
love; with your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of  
your eyes; with your arms crossed on your thin-belly  
doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in  
your pocket like a man after the old painting; and  
keep not too long in one tune, but a snip and away.  
These are complements, these are humours; these  
betray nice wenches, that would be betrayed without  
these; and make them men of note--do you note  
me?--that most are affected to these.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

How hast thou purchased this experience?  
MOTH

By my penny of observation.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

But O,--but O,--  
MOTH

'The hobby-horse is forgot.'  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Callest thou my love 'hobby-horse'?  
MOTH

No, master; the hobby-horse is but a colt, and your  
love perhaps a hackney. But have you forgot your love?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Almost I had.  
MOTH

Negligent student! learn her by heart.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By heart and in heart, boy.

MOTH

And out of heart, master: all those three I will prove.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

What wilt thou prove?  
MOTH

A man, if I live; and this, by, in, and without, upon  
the instant: by heart you love her, because your  
heart cannot come by her; in heart you love her,  
because your heart is in love with her; and out of  
heart you love her, being out of heart that you  
cannot enjoy her.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I am all these three.  
MOTH

And three times as much more, and yet nothing at  
all.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Fetch hither the swain: he must carry me a letter.  
MOTH

A message well sympathized; a horse to be ambassador  
for an ass.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Ha, ha! what sayest thou?  
MOTH

Marry, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse,  
for he is very slow-gaited. But I go.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The way is but short: away!  
MOTH

As swift as lead, sir.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The meaning, pretty ingenious?  
Is not lead a metal heavy, dull, and slow?  
MOTH

Minime, honest master; or rather, master, no.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I say lead is slow.



MOTH

You are too swift, sir, to say so:  
Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet smoke of rhetoric!  
He reputes me a cannon; and the bullet, that's he:  
I shoot thee at the swain.  
MOTH

Thump then and I flee.

Exit  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

A most acute juvenal; voluble and free of grace!  
By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face:  
Most rude melancholy, valour gives thee place.  
My herald is return'd.

Re-enter MOTH with COSTARD  
MOTH

A wonder, master! here's a costard broken in a shin.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Some enigma, some riddle: come, thy l'envoy; begin.  
COSTARD

No enigma, no riddle, no l'envoy; no salve in the  
mail, sir: O, sir, plantain, a plain plantain! no  
l'envoy, no l'envoy; no salve, sir, but a plantain!  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By virtue, thou enforcest laughter; thy silly  
thought my spleen; the heaving of my lungs provokes  
me to ridiculous smiling. O, pardon me, my stars!  
Doth the inconsiderate take salve for l'envoy, and  
the word l'envoy for a salve?  
MOTH

Do the wise think them other? is not l'envoy a salve?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

No, page: it is an epilogue or discourse, to make plain  
Some obscure precedence that hath tofore been sain.  
I will example it:  
The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,  
Were still at odds, being but three.  
There's the moral. Now the l'envoy.

MOTH

I will add the l'envoy. Say the moral again.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,  
Were still at odds, being but three.  
MOTH

Until the goose came out of door,  
And stay'd the odds by adding four.  
Now will I begin your moral, and do you follow with  
my l'envoy.  
The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,  
Were still at odds, being but three.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Until the goose came out of door,  
Staying the odds by adding four.  
MOTH

A good l'envoy, ending in the goose: would you  
desire more?  
COSTARD

The boy hath sold him a bargain, a goose, that's flat.  
Sir, your pennyworth is good, an your goose be fat.  
To sell a bargain well is as cunning as fast and loose:  
Let me see; a fat l'envoy; ay, that's a fat goose.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Come hither, come hither. How did this argument begin?  
MOTH

By saying that a costard was broken in a shin.  
Then call'd you for the l'envoy.  
COSTARD

True, and I for a plantain: thus came your  
argument in;  
Then the boy's fat l'envoy, the goose that you bought;  
And he ended the market.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

But tell me; how was there a costard broken in a shin?  
MOTH

I will tell you sensibly.  
COSTARD

Thou hast no feeling of it, Moth: I will speak that l'envoy:

I Costard, running out, that was safely within,  
Fell over the threshold and broke my shin.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

We will talk no more of this matter.  
COSTARD

Till there be more matter in the shin.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.  
COSTARD

O, marry me to one Frances: I smell some l'envoy,  
some goose, in this.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty,  
enfreesing thy person; thou wert immured,  
restrained, captivated, bound.  
COSTARD

True, true; and now you will be my purgation and let me loose.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance; and,  
in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this:  
bear this significant

Giving a letter

to the country maid Jaquenetta:  
there is remuneration; for the best ward of mine  
honour is rewarding my dependents. Moth, follow.

Exit  
MOTH

Like the sequel, I, Signior Costard, adieu.  
COSTARD

My sweet ounce of man's flesh! my incony Jew!

Exit MOTH

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration!  
O, that's the Latin word for three farthings: three  
farthings--remuneration.--'What's the price of this  
inkle?'--'One penny.'--'No, I'll give you a  
remuneration.' why, it carries it. Remuneration!  
why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will

never buy and sell out of this word.

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;  
A very beadle to a humorous sigh;  
A critic, nay, a night-watch constable;  
A domineering pedant o'er the boy;  
Than whom no mortal so magnificent!  
This whimp'd, whining, purblind, wayward boy;  
This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;  
Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,  
The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,  
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,  
Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,  
Sole imperator and great general  
Of trotting 'paritors:--O my little heart:--  
And I to be a corporal of his field,  
And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!  
What, I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!  
A woman, that is like a German clock,  
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,  
And never going aright, being a watch,  
But being watch'd that it may still go right!  
Nay, to be perjur'd, which is worst of all;  
And, among three, to love the worst of all;  
A wightlly wanton with a velvet brow,  
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;  
Ay, and by heaven, one that will do the deed  
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:  
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 4

## Scene 1

The same.

Enter the PRINCESS, and her train, a Forester, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE PRINCESS

Was that the king, that spurred his horse so hard  
Against the steep uprising of the hill?  
BOYET

I know not; but I think it was not he.  
PRINCESS

Whoe'er a' was, a' show'd a mounting mind.  
Well, lords, to-day we shall have our dispatch:  
On Saturday we will return to France.  
Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush  
That we must stand and play the murderer in?  
Forester

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.  
Forester

Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.  
PRINCESS

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

Yes, madam, fair.  
PRINCESS

Nay, never paint me now:  
Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.  
Here, good my glass, take this for telling true:  
Fair payment for foul words is more than due.  
Forester

Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.  
PRINCESS

See see, my beauty will be saved by merit!  
O heresy in fair, fit for these days!  
A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.  
But come, the bow: now mercy goes to kill,  
And shooting well is then accounted ill.  
Thus will I save my credit in the shoot:  
Not wounding, pity would not let me do't;  
If wounding, then it was to show my skill,  
That more for praise than purpose meant to kill.  
And out of question so it is sometimes,  
Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,  
When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,  
We bend to that the working of the heart;  
As I for praise alone now seek to spill  
The poor deer's blood, that my heart means no ill.  
BOYET

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

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?  
PRINCESS

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

Which is the greatest lady, the highest?  
PRINCESS

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.

Reads

BOYET

'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 illustrious king Cophetua set  
eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar  
Zenelophon; and he it was that might rightly say,  
Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothimize 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:  
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,  
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'  
Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar  
'Gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey.  
Submissive fall his princely feet before,  
And he from forage will incline to play:  
But if thou strive, poor soul, what art thou then?  
Food for his rage, repasture for his den.  
PRINCESS

What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?  
What vane? what weathercock? did you ever hear better?  
BOYET

I am much deceived but I remember the style.  
PRINCESS

Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile.  
BOYET

This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court;  
A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport  
To the prince and his bookmates.  
PRINCESS

Thou fellow, a word:  
Who gave thee this letter?  
COSTARD

I told you; my lord.  
PRINCESS

To whom shouldst thou give it?  
COSTARD

From my lord to my lady.  
PRINCESS

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, lords, away.

To ROSALINE

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

Exeunt PRINCESS and train  
BOYET

Who is the suitor? who is the suitor?  
ROSALINE

Shall I teach you to know?  
BOYET

Ay, my continent of beauty.  
ROSALINE

Why, she that bears the bow.  
Finely put off!  
BOYET

My lady goes to kill horns; but, if thou marry,  
Hang me by the neck, if horns that year miscarry.  
Finely put on!  
ROSALINE

Well, then, I am the shooter.  
BOYET

And who is your deer?  
ROSALINE

If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near.  
Finely put on, indeed!  
MARIA

You still wrangle with her, Boyet, and she strikes  
at the brow.  
BOYET

But she herself is hit lower: have I hit her now?  
ROSALINE

Shall I come upon thee with an old saying, that was  
a man when King Pepin of France was a little boy, as  
touching the hit it?  
BOYET

So I may answer thee with one as old, that was a  
woman when Queen Guinover of Britain was a little  
wench, as touching the hit it.  
ROSALINE

Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,  
Thou canst not hit it, my good man.  
BOYET

An I cannot, cannot, cannot,  
An I cannot, another can.

Exeunt ROSALINE and KATHARINE  
COSTARD

By my troth, most pleasant: how both did fit it!  
MARIA

A mark marvellous well shot, for they both did hit it.  
BOYET

A mark! O, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady!  
Let the mark have a prick in't, to mete at, if it may be.  
MARIA

Wide o' the bow hand! i' faith, your hand is out.  
COSTARD

Indeed, a' must shoot nearer, or he'll ne'er hit the clout.  
BOYET

An if my hand be out, then belike your hand is in.  
COSTARD

Then will she get the upshoot by cleaving the pin.  
MARIA

Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul.  
COSTARD

She's too hard for you at pricks, sir: challenge her to bowl.  
BOYET

I fear too much rubbing. Good night, my good owl.

Exeunt BOYET and MARIA  
COSTARD

By my soul, a swain! a most simple clown!  
Lord, Lord, how the ladies and I have put him down!  
O' my troth, most sweet jests! most incony  
vulgar wit!  
When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it  
were, so fit.  
Armado o' th' one side,--O, a most dainty man!  
To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan!  
To see him kiss his hand! and how most sweetly a'  
will swear!  
And his page o' t' other side, that handful of wit!

Ah, heavens, it is a most pathetic nit!  
Sola, sola!

Shout within

Exit COSTARD, running

## Scene 2

The same.

Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL  
SIR NATHANIEL

Very reverend sport, truly; and done in the testimony  
of a good conscience.  
HOLOFERNES

The deer was, as you know, sanguis, in blood; ripe  
as the pomewater, who now hangeth like a jewel in  
the ear of caelo, the sky, the welkin, the heaven;  
and anon falleth like a crab on the face of terra,  
the soil, the land, the earth.  
SIR NATHANIEL

Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are sweetly  
varied, like a scholar at the least: but, sir, I  
assure ye, it was a buck of the first head.  
HOLOFERNES

Sir Nathaniel, haud credo.  
DULL

'Twas not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.  
HOLOFERNES

Most barbarous intimation! yet a kind of  
insinuation, as it were, in via, in way, of  
explication; facere, as it were, replication, or  
rather, ostentare, to show, as it were, his  
inclination, after his undressed, unpolished,  
uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather,  
unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed fashion, to  
insert again my haud credo for a deer.  
DULL

I said the deer was not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.  
HOLOFERNES

Twice-sod simplicity, his coctus!

O thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!  
SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred  
in a book; he hath not eat paper, as it were; he  
hath not drunk ink: his intellect is not  
replenished; he is only an animal, only sensible in  
the duller parts:  
And such barren plants are set before us, that we  
thankful should be,  
Which we of taste and feeling are, for those parts that  
do fructify in us more than he.  
For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool,  
So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in a school:  
But omne bene, say I; being of an old father's mind,  
Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.  
DULL

You two are book-men: can you tell me by your wit  
What was a month old at Cain's birth, that's not five  
weeks old as yet?  
HOLOFERNES

Dictynna, goodman Dull; Dictynna, goodman Dull.  
DULL

What is Dictynna?  
SIR NATHANIEL

A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon.  
HOLOFERNES

The moon was a month old when Adam was no more,  
And raught not to five weeks when he came to  
five-score.  
The allusion holds in the exchange.  
DULL

'Tis true indeed; the collusion holds in the exchange.  
HOLOFERNES

God comfort thy capacity! I say, the allusion holds  
in the exchange.  
DULL

And I say, the pollution holds in the exchange; for  
the moon is never but a month old: and I say beside  
that, 'twas a pricket that the princess killed.  
HOLOFERNES

Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph

on the death of the deer? And, to humour the  
ignorant, call I the deer the princess killed a pricket.  
SIR NATHANIEL

Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge; so it shall  
please you to abrogate scurrility.  
HOLOFERNES

I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.  
The preyful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty  
pleasing pricket;  
Some say a sore; but not a sore, till now made  
sore with shooting.  
The dogs did yell: put L to sore, then sorel jumps  
from thicket;  
Or pricket sore, or else sorel; the people fall a-hooting.  
If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores  
one sorel.  
Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one more L.  
SIR NATHANIEL

A rare talent!  
DULL

[Aside]

If a talent be a claw, look how he claws  
him with a talent.  
HOLOFERNES

This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a  
foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures,  
shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions,  
revolutions: these are begot in the ventricle of  
memory, nourished in the womb of pia mater, and  
delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the  
gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am  
thankful for it.  
SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, I praise the Lord for you; and so may my  
parishioners; for their sons are well tutored by  
you, and their daughters profit very greatly under  
you: you are a good member of the commonwealth.  
HOLOFERNES

Mehercle, if their sons be ingenuous, they shall  
want no instruction; if their daughters be capable,  
I will put it to them: but vir sapit qui pauca  
loquitur; a soul feminine saluteth us.

Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD  
JAQUENETTA

God give you good morrow, master Parson.  
HOLOFERNES

Master Parson, quasi pers-on. An if one should be  
pierced, which is the one?  
COSTARD

Marry, master schoolmaster, he that is likest to a hogshead.  
HOLOFERNES

Piercing a hogshead! a good lustre of conceit in a  
tuft of earth; fire enough for a flint, pearl enough  
for a swine: 'tis pretty; it is well.  
JAQUENETTA

Good master Parson, be so good as read me this  
letter: it was given me by Costard, and sent me  
from Don Armado: I beseech you, read it.  
HOLOFERNES

Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra  
Ruminat,--and so forth. Ah, good old Mantuan! I  
may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice;  
Venetia, Venetia,  
Chi non ti vede non ti pretia.  
Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! who understandeth thee  
not, loves thee not. Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa.  
Under pardon, sir, what are the contents? or rather,  
as Horace says in his--What, my soul, verses?  
SIR NATHANIEL

Ay, sir, and very learned.  
HOLOFERNES

Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; lege, domine.  
SIR NATHANIEL

[Reads]

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?  
Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd!  
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove:  
Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like  
osiers bow'd.  
Study his bias leaves and makes his book thine eyes,  
Where all those pleasures live that art would  
comprehend:  
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;

Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend,  
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;  
Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire:  
Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,  
Which not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.  
Celestial as thou art, O, pardon, love, this wrong,  
That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.  
HOLOFERNES

You find not the apostrophas, and so miss the  
accent: let me supervise the canzonet. Here are  
only numbers ratified; but, for the elegancy,  
facility, and golden cadence of poesy, caret.  
Ovidius Naso was the man: and why, indeed, Naso,  
but for smelling out the odouriferous flowers of  
fancy, the jerks of invention? Imitari is nothing:  
so doth the hound his master, the ape his keeper,  
the tired horse his rider. But, damosella virgin,  
was this directed to you?  
JAQUENETTA

Ay, sir, from one Monsieur Biron, one of the strange  
queen's lords.  
HOLOFERNES

I will overglance the superscript: 'To the  
snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady  
Rosaline.' I will look again on the intellect of  
the letter, for the nomination of the party writing  
to the person written unto: 'Your ladyship's in all  
desired employment, BIRON.' Sir Nathaniel, this  
Biron is one of the votaries with the king; and here  
he hath framed a letter to a sequent of the stranger  
queen's, which accidentally, or by the way of  
progression, hath miscarried. Trip and go, my  
sweet; deliver this paper into the royal hand of the  
king: it may concern much. Stay not thy  
compliment; I forgive thy duty; adieu.  
JAQUENETTA

Good Costard, go with me. Sir, God save your life!  
COSTARD

Have with thee, my girl.

Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA  
SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, you have done this in the fear of God, very  
religiously; and, as a certain father saith,--  
HOLOFERNES



Sir tell me not of the father; I do fear colourable  
colours. But to return to the verses: did they  
please you, Sir Nathaniel?  
SIR NATHANIEL

Marvellous well for the pen.  
HOLOFERNES

I do dine to-day at the father's of a certain pupil  
of mine; where, if, before repast, it shall please  
you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my  
privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid  
child or pupil, undertake your benvenuto; where I  
will prove those verses to be very unlearned,  
neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention: I  
beseech your society.  
SIR NATHANIEL

And thank you too; for society, saith the text, is  
the happiness of life.  
HOLOFERNES

And, certes, the text most infallibly concludes it.

To DULL

Sir, I do invite you too; you shall not  
say me nay: pauca verba. Away! the gentles are at  
their game, and we will to our recreation.

Exeunt

## Scene 3

The same.

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  
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 shinest 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!  
To see great Hercules whipping a gig,  
And profound Solomon to tune a jig,  
And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,  
And critic Timon laugh at idle toys!  
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:  
A caudle, ho!  
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 JAQUENETTA and COSTARD  
JAQUENETTA

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.  
JAQUENETTA

I beseech your grace, let this letter be read:  
Our parson misdoubts it; 'twas treason, he said.  
FERDINAND

Biron, read it over.

Giving him the paper

Where hadst thou it?  
JAQUENETTA

Of Costard.  
FERDINAND

Where hadst thou it?  
COSTARD

Of Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio.

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 these turtles be gone?  
FERDINAND

Hence, sirs; away!  
COSTARD

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

Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA  
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

What, did these rent lines show some love of thine?  
BIRON

Did they, quoth you? Who sees the heavenly Rosaline,  
That, like a rude and savage man of Inde,  
At the first opening of the gorgeous east,  
Bows not his vassal head and stricken blind  
Kisses the base ground with obedient breast?  
What peremptory eagle-sighted eye

Dares look upon the heaven of her brow,  
That is not blinded by her majesty?  
FERDINAND

What zeal, what fury hath inspired thee now?  
My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon;  
She an attending star, scarce seen a light.  
BIRON

My eyes are then no eyes, nor I Biron:  
O, but for my love, day would turn to night!  
Of all complexions the cull'd sovereignty  
Do meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek,  
Where several worthies make one dignity,  
Where nothing wants that want itself doth seek.  
Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues,--  
Fie, painted rhetoric! O, she needs it not:  
To things of sale a seller's praise belongs,  
She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot.  
A wither'd hermit, five-score winters worn,  
Might shake off fifty, looking in her eye:  
Beauty doth varnish age, as if new-born,  
And gives the crutch the cradle's infancy:  
O, 'tis the sun that maketh all things shine.  
FERDINAND

By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.  
BIRON

Is ebony like her? O wood divine!  
A wife of such wood were felicity.  
O, who can give an oath? where is a book?  
That I may swear beauty doth beauty lack,  
If that she learn not of her eye to look:  
No face is fair that is not full so black.  
FERDINAND

O paradox! Black is the badge of hell,  
The hue of dungeons and the suit of night;  
And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well.  
BIRON

Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light.  
O, if in black my lady's brows be deck'd,  
It mourns that painting and usurping hair  
Should ravish doters with a false aspect;  
And therefore is she born to make black fair.  
Her favour turns the fashion of the days,  
For native blood is counted painting now;  
And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,  
Paints itself black, to imitate her brow.

DUMAIN

To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.  
LONGAVILLE

And since her time are colliers counted bright.  
FERDINAND

And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack.  
DUMAIN

Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.  
BIRON

Your mistresses dare never come in rain,  
For fear their colours should be wash'd away.  
FERDINAND

'Twere good, yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain,  
I'll find a fairer face not wash'd to-day.  
BIRON

I'll prove her fair, or talk till doomsday here.  
FERDINAND

No devil will fright thee then so much as she.  
DUMAIN

I never knew man hold vile stuff so dear.  
LONGAVILLE

Look, here's thy love: my foot and her face see.  
BIRON

O, if the streets were paved with thine eyes,  
Her feet were much too dainty for such tread!  
DUMAIN

O, vile! then, as she goes, what upward lies  
The street should see as she walk'd overhead.  
FERDINAND

But what of this? are we not all in love?  
BIRON

Nothing so sure; and thereby all forsworn.  
FERDINAND

Then leave this chat; and, good Biron, now prove  
Our loving lawful, and our faith not torn.  
DUMAIN

Ay, marry, there; some flattery for this evil.  
LONGAVILLE

O, some authority how to proceed;  
Some tricks, some quillets, how to cheat the devil.  
DUMAIN

Some salve for perjury.  
BIRON

'Tis more than need.  
Have at you, then, affection's men at arms.  
Consider what you first did swear unto,  
To fast, to study, and to see no woman;  
Flat treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth.  
Say, can you fast? your stomachs are too young;  
And abstinence engenders maladies.  
And where that you have vow'd to study, lords,  
In that each of you have forsworn his book,  
Can you still dream and pore and thereon look?  
For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,  
Have found the ground of study's excellence  
Without the beauty of a woman's face?

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive; They are the ground, the books, the academes  
From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire

Why, universal plodding poisons up  
The nimble spirits in the arteries,  
As motion and long-during action tires  
The sinewy vigour of the traveller.  
Now, for not looking on a woman's face,  
You have in that forsworn the use of eyes  
And study too, the causer of your vow;  
For where is any author in the world  
Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?  
Learning is but an adjunct to ourself  
And where we are our learning likewise is:  
Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,  
Do we not likewise see our learning there?  
O, we have made a vow to study, lords,  
And in that vow we have forsworn our books.  
For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,  
In leaden contemplation have found out  
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes  
Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?  
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain;  
And therefore, finding barren practisers,  
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil:  
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,

Lives not alone immured in the brain;  
But, with the motion of all elements,  
Courses as swift as thought in every power,  
And gives to every power a double power,  
Above their functions and their offices.  
It adds a precious seeing to the eye;  
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;  
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,  
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd:  
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible  
Than are the tender horns of cockl'd snails;  
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste:  
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,  
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?  
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical  
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair:  
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods  
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.  
Never durst poet touch a pen to write  
Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs;  
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears  
And plant in tyrants mild humility.  
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:  
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;  
They are the books, the arts, the academes,  
That show, contain and nourish all the world:  
Else none at all in ought proves excellent.  
Then fools you were these women to forswear,  
Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.  
For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,  
Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,  
Or for men's sake, the authors of these women,  
Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,  
Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,  
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.  
It is religion to be thus forsworn,  
For charity itself fulfills the law,  
And who can sever love from charity?  
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?  
FERDINAND

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.  
BIRON

Allons! allons! Sow'd cockle reap'd no corn;  
And justice always whirls in equal measure:  
Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn;  
If so, our copper buys no better treasure.

Exeunt

# Act 5

## Scene 1

The same.

Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL  
HOLOFERNES

Satis quod sufficit.  
SIR NATHANIEL

I praise God for you, sir: your reasons at dinner  
have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without  
scurrility, witty without affection, audacious without  
impudency, learned without opinion, and strange with-  
out heresy. I did converse this quondam day with  
a companion of the king's, who is intituled, nomi-  
nated, or called, Don Adriano de Armado.  
HOLOFERNES

Novi hominem tanquam te: his humour is lofty, his  
discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye

ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

SIR NATHANIEL

A most singular and choice epithet.

Draws out his table-book  
HOLOFERNES

He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasies, such insociable and point-devise companions; such rackers of orthography, as to speak dout, fine, when he should say doubt; det, when he should pronounce debt,--d, e, b, t, not d, e, t: he clepeth a calf, cauf; half, hauf; neighbour vocatur nebor; neigh abbreviated ne. This is abhominable,--which he would call abbominable: it insinuateth me of insanie: anne intelligis, domine? to make frantic, lunatic.

SIR NATHANIEL

Laus Deo, bene intelligo.  
HOLOFERNES

Bon, bon, fort bon, Priscian! a little scratch'd, 'twill serve.  
SIR NATHANIEL

Videsne quis venit?  
HOLOFERNES

Video, et gaudeo.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, MOTH, and COSTARD  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Chirrah!

To MOTH  
HOLOFERNES

Quare chirrah, not sirrah?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Men of peace, well encountered.  
HOLOFERNES

Most military sir, salutation.

MOTH

[Aside to COSTARD]

They have been at a great feast  
of languages, and stolen the scraps.  
COSTARD

O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words.  
I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word;  
for thou art not so long by the head as  
honorificabilitudinitatibus: thou art easier  
swallowed than a flap-dragon.  
MOTH

Peace! the peal begins.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

[To HOLOFERNES]

Monsieur, are you not lettered?  
MOTH

Yes, yes; he teaches boys the hornbook. What is a,  
b, spelt backward, with the horn on his head?  
HOLOFERNES

Ba, pueritia, with a horn added.  
MOTH

Ba, most silly sheep with a horn. You hear his learning.  
HOLOFERNES

Quis, quis, thou consonant?  
MOTH

The third of the five vowels, if you repeat them; or  
the fifth, if I.  
HOLOFERNES

I will repeat them,--a, e, i,--  
MOTH

The sheep: the other two concludes it,--o, u.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterraneum, a sweet  
touch, a quick venue of wit! snip, snap, quick and  
home! it rejoiceth my intellect: true wit!  
MOTH



Offered by a child to an old man; which is wit-old.  
HOLOFERNES

What is the figure? what is the figure?  
MOTH

Horns.  
HOLOFERNES

Thou disputest like an infant: go, whip thy gig.  
MOTH

Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about  
your infamy circum circa,--a gig of a cuckold's horn.  
COSTARD

An I had but one penny in the world, thou shouldst  
have it to buy gingerbread: hold, there is the very  
remuneration I had of thy master, thou halfpenny  
purse of wit, thou pigeon-egg of discretion. O, an  
the heavens were so pleased that thou wert but my  
bastard, what a joyful father wouldst thou make me!  
Go to; thou hast it ad dunghill, at the fingers'  
ends, as they say.  
HOLOFERNES

O, I smell false Latin; dunghill for unguem.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Arts-man, preambulate, we will be singled from the  
barbarous. Do you not educate youth at the  
charge-house on the top of the mountain?  
HOLOFERNES

Or mons, the hill.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.  
HOLOFERNES

I do, sans question.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sir, it is the king's most sweet pleasure and  
affection to congratulate the princess at her  
pavilion in the posteriors of this day, which the  
rude multitude call the afternoon.  
HOLOFERNES

The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is  
liable, congruent and measurable for the afternoon:

the word is well culled, chose, sweet and apt, I do assure you, sir, I do assure.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sir, 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, and with his royal finger, thus, dally with my excrement, with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass. By the world, I recount no fable: some certain special honours it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado, 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, sweet chuck, with some delightful ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antique, or firework. Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal, to the end to crave your assistance.

HOLOFERNES

Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies. Sir, as concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day, to be rendered by our assistants, at the king's command, and this most gallant, illustrate, and learned gentleman, before the princess; I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

SIR NATHANIEL

Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?

HOLOFERNES

Joshua, yourself; myself and this gallant gentleman, Judas Maccabaeus; this swain, because of his great limb or joint, shall pass Pompey the Great; the page, Hercules,--

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Pardon, sir; error: he is not quantity enough for that Worthy's thumb: he is not so big as the end of his club.

HOLOFERNES

Shall I have audience? he shall present Hercules in  
minority: his enter and exit shall be strangling a  
snake; and I will have an apology for that purpose.  
MOTH

An excellent device! so, if any of the audience  
hiss, you may cry 'Well done, Hercules! now thou  
crushest the snake!' that is the way to make an  
offence gracious, though few have the grace to do it.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

For the rest of the Worthies?--  
HOLOFERNES

I will play three myself.  
MOTH

Thrice-worthy gentleman!  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Shall I tell you a thing?  
HOLOFERNES

We attend.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

We will have, if this fadge not, an antique. I  
beseech you, follow.  
HOLOFERNES

Via, goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while.  
DULL

Nor understood none neither, sir.  
HOLOFERNES

Allons! we will employ thee.  
DULL

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.  
HOLOFERNES

Most dull, honest Dull! To our sport, away!

Exeunt

## Scene 2

The same.

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.  
ROSALINE

That was the way to make his godhead wax,  
For he hath been five thousand years a boy.  
KATHARINE

Ay, and a shrewd unhappy gallows too.  
ROSALINE

You'll ne'er be friends with him; a' kill'd your sister.  
KATHARINE

He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy;  
And so she died: had she been light, like you,  
Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,  
She might ha' been a grandam ere she died:  
And so may you; for a light heart lives long.  
ROSALINE

What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?  
KATHARINE

A light condition in a beauty dark.  
ROSALINE

We need more light to find your meaning out.  
KATHARINE

You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff;  
Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.  
ROSALINE

Look what you do, you do it still i' the dark.  
KATHARINE

So do not you, for you are a light wench.  
ROSALINE

Indeed I weigh not you, and therefore light.  
KATHARINE

You weigh me not? O, that's you care not for me.  
ROSALINE

Great reason; for 'past cure is still past care.'  
PRINCESS

Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.  
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

Beauteous as ink; a good conclusion.  
KATHARINE

Fair as a text B in a copy-book.  
ROSALINE

'Ware pencils, ho! let me not die your debtor,  
My red dominical, my golden letter:  
O, that your face were not so full of O's!  
KATHARINE

A pox of that jest! and I beshrew all shrows.  
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.

That same Biron I'll torture ere I go:

O that I knew he were but in by the week!

How I would make him fawn and beg and seek

And wait the season and observe the times

And spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes

And shape his service wholly to my hests

And make him proud to make me proud that jests!

So perttaunt-like would I o'ersway his state

That he should be my fool and I his fate.

PRINCESS

None are so surely caught, when they are catch'd,

As wit turn'd fool: folly, in wisdom hatch'd,

Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school

And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.

ROSALINE

The blood of youth burns not with such excess

As gravity's revolt to wantonness.

MARIA

Folly in fools bears not so strong a note

As foolery in the wise, when wit doth dote;

Since all the power thereof it doth apply

To prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.  
PRINCESS

Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his 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  
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.  
PRINCESS

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.  
Their herald is a pretty knavish page,  
That well by heart hath conn'd his embassy:  
Action and accent did they teach him there;  
'Thus must thou speak,' and 'thus thy body bear.'  
And ever and anon they made a doubt  
Presence majestical would put him out,  
'For,' quoth the king, 'an angel shalt thou see;  
Yet fear not thou, but speak audaciously.'  
The boy replied, 'An angel is not evil;  
I should have fear'd her had she been a devil.'  
With that, all laugh'd and clapp'd him on the shoulder,  
Making the bold wag by their praises bolder:  
One rubb'd his elbow thus, and fleer'd and swore  
A better speech was never spoke before;  
Another, with his finger and his thumb,  
Cried, 'Via! we will do't, come what will come;'  
The third he caper'd, and cried, 'All goes well;'

The fourth turn'd on the toe, and down he fell.  
With that, they all did tumble on the ground,  
With such a zealous laughter, so profound,  
That in this spleen ridiculous appears,  
To cheque their folly, passion's solemn tears.  
PRINCESS

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.  
KATHARINE

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.  
Their several counsels they unbosom shall  
To loves mistook, and so be mock'd withal  
Upon the next occasion that we meet,  
With visages displayed, to talk and greet.  
ROSALINE

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 Blackamoors with music; MOTH; FERDINAND, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN, in  
Russian habits, and masked

MOTH

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

BOYET

Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.

MOTH

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 MOTH]

Their eyes, villain, their eyes!

MOTH

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

BOYET

True; out indeed.

MOTH

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

BIRON

[Aside to MOTH]

Once to behold, rogue.

MOTH

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.'

MOTH

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

BIRON

Is this your perfectness? be gone, you rogue!

Exit MOTH

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

O vain petitioner! beg a greater matter;  
Thou now request'st but moonshine in the water.  
FERDINAND

Then, in our measure do but vouchsafe one change.  
Thou bid'st me beg: this begging is not strange.  
ROSALINE

Play, music, then! Nay, you must do it soon.

Music plays

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

Why take we hands, then?  
ROSALINE

Only to part friends:  
Curtsy, sweet hearts; and so the measure ends.  
FERDINAND

More measure of this measure; be not nice.  
ROSALINE

We can afford no more at such a price.  
FERDINAND

Prize you yourselves: what buys your company?  
ROSALINE

Your absence only.  
FERDINAND

That can never be.  
ROSALINE

Then cannot we be bought: and so, adieu;  
Twice to your visor, and half once to you.  
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

Nay then, two treys, and if you grow so nice,  
Metheglin, wort, and malmsey: well run, dice!  
There's half-a-dozen sweets.  
PRINCESS

Seventh sweet, adieu:  
Since you can cog, I'll play no more with you.  
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

Veal, quoth the Dutchman. Is not 'veal' a calf?

LONGAVILLE

A calf, fair lady!

KATHARINE

No, a fair lord calf.

LONGAVILLE

Let's part the word.

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, Lords, and Blackamoors

Are these the breed of wits so wonder'd at?

BOYET

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

ROSALINE

Well-liking wits they have; gross, gross; fat, fat.

PRINCESS

O poverty in wit, kingly-poor flout!  
Will they not, think you, hang themselves tonight?  
Or ever, but in vizards, show their faces?  
This pert Biron was out of countenance quite.

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 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.  
PRINCESS

How blow? how blow? speak to be understood.  
BOYET

Fair ladies mask'd are roses in their bud;  
Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,  
Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.  
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.  
PRINCESS

Whip to our tents, as roes run o'er land.

Exeunt PRINCESS, ROSALINE, KATHARINE, and MARIA

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

Fair sir, God save you! Where's the princess?  
BOYET

Gone to her tent. Please it your majesty  
Command me any service to her thither?  
FERDINAND

That she vouchsafe me audience for one word.  
BOYET

I will; and so will she, I know, my lord.

Exit  
BIRON

This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons pease,  
And utters it again when God doth please:  
He is wit's pedler, and retails his wares  
At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs;  
And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,  
Have not the grace to grace it with such show.  
This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve;  
Had he been Adam, he had tempted Eve;  
A' can carve too, and lisp: why, this is he  
That kiss'd his hand away in courtesy;  
This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice,  
That, when he plays at tables, chides the dice  
In honourable terms: nay, he can sing  
A mean most meanly; and in ushering  
Mend him who can: the ladies call him sweet;  
The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet:

This is the flower that smiles on every one,  
To show his teeth as white as whale's bone;  
And consciences, that will not die in debt,  
Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet.  
FERDINAND

A blister on his sweet tongue, with my heart,  
That put Armado's page out of his part!  
BIRON

See where it comes! Behavior, what wert thou  
Till this madman show'd thee? and what art thou now?

Re-enter the PRINCESS, ushered by BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE  
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 descried; 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.

BIRON

Thus pour the stars down plagues for perjury.  
Can any face of brass hold longer out?  
Here stand I lady, dart thy skill at me;  
Bruise me with scorn, confound me with a flout;  
Thrust thy sharp wit quite through my ignorance;  
Cut me to pieces with thy keen conceit;  
And I will wish thee never more to dance,  
Nor never more in Russian habit wait.  
O, never will I trust to speeches penn'd,  
Nor to the motion of a schoolboy's tongue,  
Nor never come in vizard to my friend,  
Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song!  
Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
Figures pedantical; these summer-flies  
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation:  
I do forswear them; and I here protest,  
By this white glove;--how white the hand, God knows!--  
Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express'd  
In russet yeas and honest kersey noes:  
And, to begin, wench,--so God help me, la!--  
My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.

ROSALINE

Sans sans, I pray you.

BIRON

Yet I have a trick  
Of the old rage: bear with me, I am sick;  
I'll leave it by degrees. Soft, let us see:  
Write, 'Lord have mercy on us' on those three;  
They are infected; in their hearts it lies;  
They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes;  
These lords are visited; you are not free,  
For the Lord's tokens on you do I see.  
PRINCESS

No, they are free that gave these tokens to us.  
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 aforehand 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.  
Much upon this it is: and might not you

To BOYET

Forestall our sport, to make us thus untrue?  
Do not you know my lady's foot by the squier,  
And laugh upon the apple of her eye?  
And stand between her back, sir, and the fire,  
Holding a trencher, jesting merrily?  
You put our page out: go, you are allow'd;  
Die when you will, a smock shall be your shroud.  
You leer upon me, do you? there's an eye  
Wounds like a leaden sword.  
BOYET

Full merrily  
Hath this brave manage, this career, been run.  
BIRON

Lo, he is tilting straight! Peace! I have done.

Enter COSTARD

Welcome, pure wit! thou partest a fair fray.  
COSTARD

O Lord, sir, they would know  
Whether the three Worthies shall come in or no.  
BIRON

What, are there but three?  
COSTARD

No, sir; but it is vara fine,  
For every one pursents three.  
BIRON

And three times thrice is nine.  
COSTARD

Not so, sir; under correction, sir; I hope it is not so.  
You cannot beg us, sir, I can assure you, sir we know

what we know:

I hope, sir, three times thrice, sir,--

BIRON

Is not nine.

COSTARD

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

BIRON

By Jove, I always took three threes for nine.

COSTARD

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

by reckoning, sir.

BIRON

How much is it?

COSTARD

O Lord, sir, the parties themselves, the actors,

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, Pompion the Great, sir.

BIRON

Art thou one of the Worthies?

COSTARD

It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompion the

Great: for mine own part, I know not the degree of

the Worthy, but I am to stand for him.

BIRON

Go, bid them prepare.

COSTARD

We will turn it finely off, sir; we will take

some care.

Exit

FERDINAND

Biron, they will shame us: let them 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 they 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:  
Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,  
When great things labouring perish in their birth.  
BIRON

A right description of our sport, my lord.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Anointed, I implore so much expense of thy royal  
sweet breath as will utter a brace of words.

Converses apart with FERDINAND, and delivers him a paper  
PRINCESS

Doth this man serve God?  
BIRON

Why ask you?  
PRINCESS

He speaks not like a man of God's making.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

That is all one, my fair, sweet, honey monarch; for,  
I protest, the schoolmaster is exceeding  
fantastical; too, too vain, too too vain: but we  
will put it, as they say, to fortuna de la guerra.  
I wish you the peace of mind, most royal complement!

Exit  
FERDINAND

Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. He  
presents Hector of Troy; the swain, Pompey the  
Great; the parish curate, Alexander; Armado's page,  
Hercules; the pedant, Judas Maccabaeus: And if  
these four Worthies in their first show thrive,  
These four will change habits, 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 boy:--  
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--  
DUMAIN

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.'  
BIRON

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

Enter SIR NATHANIEL, for Alexander  
SIR NATHANIEL

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,--  
BOYET

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

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

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

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

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

[To SIR NATHANIEL]

O, sir, you have overthrown  
Alisander the conqueror! You will be scraped out of  
the painted cloth for this: your lion, that holds  
his poll-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given  
to Ajax: he will be the ninth Worthy. A conqueror,  
and afraid to speak! run away for shame, Alisander.

SIR NATHANIEL retires

There, an't shall please you; a foolish mild man; an  
honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a  
marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good

bowler: but, for Alisander,--alas, you see how  
'tis,--a little o'erparted. But there are Worthies  
a-coming will speak their mind in some other sort.

Enter HOLOFERNES, for Judas; and MOTH, for Hercules  
HOLOFERNES

Great Hercules is presented by this imp,  
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.  
Quoniam he seemeth in minority,  
Ergo I come with this apology.  
Keep some state in thy exit, and vanish.

MOTH retires

Judas I am,--  
DUMAIN

A Judas!  
HOLOFERNES

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

Judas Maccabaeus clipt is plain Judas.  
BIRON

A kissing traitor. How art thou proved Judas?  
HOLOFERNES

Judas I am,--  
DUMAIN

The more shame for you, Judas.  
HOLOFERNES

What mean you, sir?  
BOYET

To make Judas hang himself.  
HOLOFERNES

Begin, sir; you are my elder.  
BIRON

Well followed: Judas was hanged on an elder.  
HOLOFERNES

I will not be put out of countenance.

BIRON

Because thou hast no face.

HOLOFERNES

What is this?

BOYET

A cittern-head.

DUMAIN

The head of a bodkin.

BIRON

A Death's face in a ring.

LONGAVILLE

The face of an old Roman coin, scarce seen.

BOYET

The pommel of Caesar's falchion.

DUMAIN

The carved-bone face on a flask.

BIRON

Saint George's half-cheek in a brooch.

DUMAIN

Ay, and in a brooch of lead.

BIRON

Ay, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer.

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

HOLOFERNES

You have put me out of countenance.

BIRON

False; we have given thee faces.

HOLOFERNES

But you have out-faced them all.

BIRON

An thou wert a lion, we would do so.

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!

HOLOFERNES

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

BOYET

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

HOLOFERNES retires

PRINCESS

Alas, poor Maccabaeus, how hath he been baited!

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, for Hector

BIRON

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

DUMAIN

Though my mocks come home by me, I will now be merry.

FERDINAND

Hector was but a Trojan in respect of this.

BOYET

But is this Hector?

FERDINAND

I think Hector was not so clean-timbered.

LONGAVILLE

His leg is too big for Hector's.

DUMAIN

More calf, certain.

BOYET

No; he is best endued in the small.

BIRON

This cannot be Hector.

DUMAIN

He's a god or a painter; for he makes faces.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

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

A gilt nutmeg.  
BIRON

A lemon.  
LONGAVILLE

Stuck with cloves.  
DUMAIN

No, cloven.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

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

That mint.  
LONGAVILLE

That columbine.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet Lord Longaville, rein thy tongue.  
LONGAVILLE

I must rather give it the rein, for it runs against Hector.  
DUMAIN

Ay, and Hector's a greyhound.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The sweet war-man is dead and rotten; sweet chucks,  
beat not the bones of the buried: when he breathed,  
he was a man. But I will forward with my device.

To the PRINCESS

Sweet royalty, bestow on me the sense of hearing.  
PRINCESS

Speak, brave Hector: we are much delighted.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do adore thy sweet grace's slipper.  
BOYET

[Aside to DUMAIN]

Loves her by the foot,--  
DUMAIN

[Aside to BOYET]

He may not by the yard.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

This Hector far surmounted Hannibal,--  
COSTARD

The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone; she  
is two months on her way.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

What meanest thou?  
COSTARD

Faith, unless you play the honest Trojan, the poor  
wench is cast away: she's quick; the child brags in  
her belly already: tis yours.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Dost thou infamonize me among potentates? thou shalt  
die.  
COSTARD

Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquenetta that is  
quick by him and hanged for Pompey that is dead by  
him.  
DUMAIN

Most rare Pompey!  
BOYET

Renowned Pompey!  
BIRON

Greater than great, great, great, great Pompey!  
Pompey the Huge!  
DUMAIN

Hector trembles.  
BIRON

Pompey is moved. More Ates, more Ates! stir them



on! stir them on!  
DUMAIN

Hector will challenge him.  
BIRON

Ay, if a' have no man's blood in's belly than will  
sup a flea.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

By the north pole, I do challenge thee.  
COSTARD

I will not fight with a pole, like a northern man:  
I'll slash; I'll do it by the sword. I bepray you,  
let me borrow my arms again.  
DUMAIN

Room for the incensed Worthies!  
COSTARD

I'll do it in my shirt.  
DUMAIN

Most resolute Pompey!  
MOTH

Master, let me take you a buttonhole lower. Do you  
not see Pompey is uncasing for the combat? What mean  
you? You will lose your reputation.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me; I will not combat  
in my shirt.  
DUMAIN

You may not deny it: Pompey hath made the challenge.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet bloods, I both may and will.  
BIRON

What reason have you for't?  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

The naked truth of it is, I have no shirt; I go  
woolward for penance.  
BOYET

True, and it was enjoined him in Rome for want of  
linen: since when, I'll be sworn, he wore none but

a dishclout of Jaquenetta's, and that a' wears next  
his heart for a favour.

Enter MERCADE  
MERCADÉ

God save you, madam!  
PRINCESS

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

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

Dead, for my life!  
MERCADÉ

Even so; my tale is told.  
BIRON

Worthies, away! the scene begins to cloud.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

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 Worthies  
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,--  
As love is full of unbefitting strains,  
All wanton as a child, skipping and vain,  
Form'd by the eye and therefore, like the eye,  
Full of strange shapes, of habits and of forms,  
Varying in subjects as the eye doth roll  
To every varied object in his glance:  
Which parti-coated presence of loose love  
Put on by us, if, in your heavenly eyes,  
Have misbecomed our oaths and gravities,  
Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,  
Suggested us to make. Therefore, ladies,  
Our love being yours, the error that love makes  
Is likewise yours: we to ourselves prove false,  
By being once false for ever to be true  
To those that make us both,--fair ladies, you:  
And even that falsehood, in itself a sin,  
Thus purifies itself and turns to grace.  
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,  
The sudden hand of death close up mine eye!  
Hence ever then my heart is in thy breast.  
BIRON

[Aside]

And what to me, my love? and what to me?

ROSALINE

You must be purged too, your sins are rack'd,  
You are attaint with faults and perjury:  
Therefore if you my favour mean to get,  
A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,  
But seek the weary beds of people sick]  
DUMAIN

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

KATHARINE

A beard, fair health, and honesty;  
With three-fold love I wish you all these three.  
DUMAIN

O, shall I say, I thank you, gentle 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 DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Sweet majesty, vouchsafe me,--  
PRINCESS

Was not that Hector?  
DUMAIN

The worthy knight of Troy.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

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  
the two learned men have compiled in praise of the  
owl and the cuckoo? It should have followed in the  
end of our show.  
FERDINAND

Call them forth quickly; we will do so.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Holla! approach.

Re-enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, MOTH, COSTARD, and others

This side is Hiems, Winter, this Ver, the Spring;  
the one maintained by the owl, the other by the  
cuckoo. Ver, begin.

THE SONG

SPRING.  
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!  
WINTER.

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.  
ADRIANO DE ARMADO

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

Exeunt

## About this Title

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