

## [1.1]

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, [and Philostrate,  
with others.

## THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour  
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in  
Another moon; but, oh, methinks, how slow  
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,  
Like to a stepdame or a dowager  
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

## HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;  
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;  
And then the moon, like to a silver bow  
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night  
Of our solemnities.

## THESEUS

Go, Philostrate,  
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments.  
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth.  
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;  
The pale companion is not for our pomp.

[Exit Philostrate.]

Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword  
And won thy love doing thee injuries;  
But I will wed thee in another key,  
With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling.

Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and  
Lysander, and Demetrius.

## EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

## THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus. What's the news with thee?

## EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—  
Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord,  
This man hath my consent to marry her.—  
Stand forth, Lysander.—And, my gracious Duke,  
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.—  
Thou, thou Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes  
And interchanged love tokens with my child.  
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung  
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,  
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,

Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats—messengers 34  
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth. 35  
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,  
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,  
To stubborn harshness. And, my gracious Duke,  
Be it so she will not here before Your Grace 39  
Consent to marry with Demetrius,  
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:  
As she is mine, I may dispose of her,  
Which shall be either to this gentleman  
Or to her death, according to our law  
Immediately provided in that case. 45

## THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.  
To you your father should be as a god—  
One that composed your beauties; yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a form in wax  
By him imprinted, and within his power  
To leave the figure or disfigure it. 51  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

## HERMIA

So is Lysander.

## THESEUS

In himself he is;  
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,  
The other must be held the worthier. 54

## HERMIA

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

## THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

## HERMIA

I do entreat Your Grace to pardon me.  
I know not by what power I am made bold,  
Nor how it may concern my modesty  
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;  
But I beseech Your Grace that I may know  
The worst that may befall me in this case  
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

## THESEUS

Either to die the death or to abjure 65  
Forever the society of men.  
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,  
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,  
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice, 68  
You can endure the livery of a nun,  
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed, 70  
To live a barren sister all your life, 71  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
Thrice blessèd they that master so their blood  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled 76  
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,  
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

1.1 Location: Athens. Theseus's court.

4 lingers frustrates 5 stepdame stepmother a dowager i.e., a widow (whose right of inheritance from her dead husband is eating into her son's estate) 6 withering out causing to dwindle 7 Four . . . night (The image is of the day sinking into the ocean as night comes on.) 11 solemnities festive ceremonies of marriage. 18 companion fellow. (A pale complexion is linked to melancholy.) 19 pomp ceremonial magnificence. 16 with my sword i.e., in a military engagement against the Amazons, when Hippolyta was taken captive 19 triumph public festivity 31 feigning (1) counterfeiting (2) fawning, desirous 32 And . . . fantasy and made her fall in love with you (imprinting your image on her imagination) by stealthy and dishonest means 33 gauds, conceits playthings, fanciful trifles

34 Knacks . . . sweetmeats knickknacks, trinkets, bouquets, candies 35 prevailment in influence on 39 Be it so if 45 Immediately directly, with nothing intervening 51 leave i.e., leave unaltered 54 kind respect. wanting lacking. voice approval 65 die the death be executed by legal process 68 blood passions 70 livery habit, costume 71 aye ever. mewed shut in. (Said of a hawk, poultry, etc.) 76 earthlier happy happier as respects this world. distilled i.e., to make perfume

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up  
Unto His Lordship, whose unwished yoke  
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause, and by the next new moon—  
The sealing day betwixt my love and me  
For everlasting bond of fellowship—  
Upon that day either prepare to die  
For disobedience to your father's will,  
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,  
Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia, and, Lysander, yield  
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius;  
Let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! True, he hath my love,  
And what is mine my love shall render him.  
And she is mine, and all my right of her  
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
As well possessed; my love is more than his;  
My fortunes every way as fairly ranked,  
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';  
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,  
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.  
Why should not I then prosecute my right?  
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry  
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,  
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;  
But, being overfull of self-affairs,  
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come,  
And come, Egeus, you shall go with me;  
I have some private schooling for you both.  
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
To fit your fancies to your father's will,  
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—  
Which by no means we may extenuate—  
To death or to a vow of single life.  
Come, my Hippolyta. What cheer, my love?  
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.

I must employ you in some business  
Against our nuptial, and confer with you  
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

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EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

*Exeunt [all but Lysander and Hermia]*

LYSANDER

How now, my love, why is your cheek so pale?  
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA

Belike for want of rain, which I could well  
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

89 LYSANDER

Ay me! For aught that I could ever read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth;  
But either it was different in blood—

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HERMIA

Oh, cross! Too high to be enthralled to low.

LYSANDER

Or else misgrafted in respect of years—

HERMIA

Oh, spite! Too old to be engaged to young.

LYSANDER

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—

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HERMIA

Oh, hell, to choose love by another's eyes!

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LYSANDER

Or if there were a sympathy in choice,  
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,  
Making it momentary as a sound,  
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,  
Brief as the lightning in the collied night  
That in a spleen unfolds both heaven and earth,  
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"  
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.  
So quick bright things come to confusion.

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HERMIA

If then true lovers have been ever crossed,  
It stands as an edict in destiny.  
Then let us teach our trial patience,  
Because it is a customary cross,  
As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,  
Wishes, and tears, poor fancy's followers.

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LYSANDER

A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me, Hermia:  
I have a widow aunt, a dowager  
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.  
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;  
And she respects me as her only son.

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80 patent privilege 89 protest vow 92 crazèd cracked, unsound  
98 estate unto settle or bestow upon 99 as well derived as well born  
and descended 100 possessed endowed with wealth 101 fairly  
handsomely 102 vantage superiority 106 head i.e., face 110 spotted  
i.e., morally stained 113 self-affairs my own concerns  
116 schooling admonition 117 look you arm take care you prepare  
118 fancies likings, thoughts of love 120 extenuate mitigate, relax  
123 go i.e., come

125 Against in preparation for 126 nearly that that closely  
130 Belike Very likely 131 Beteem grant, afford 135 blood heredi-  
tary rank 136 cross vexation. 137 misgrafted ill grafted, badly  
matched 139 friends relatives 141 sympathy agreement  
143 momentary lasting but a moment 145 collied blackened (as  
with coal dust), darkened 146 in a spleen in a swift impulse, in a  
violent flash. unfolds reveals 149 confusion ruin. 150 ever  
crossed always thwarted 152 teach . . . patience i.e., teach ourselves  
patience in this trial 155 fancy's amorous passion's 156 persua-  
sion doctrine. 159 seven leagues about 21 miles 160 respects  
regards

Verges. Well, God's a good man. An two men ride 35  
of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, 36  
i'faith, sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread. But, God  
is to be worshipped, all men are not alike, alas, good  
neighbor!

LEONATO Indeed, neighbor, he comes too short of you.  
DOGBERRY Gifts that God gives.  
LEONATO I must leave you.  
DOGBERRY One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed  
comprehended two aspicious persons, and we would 44  
have them this morning examined before Your Wor-  
ship.

LEONATO Take their examination yourself and bring  
it me. I am now in great haste, as it may appear  
unto you.

DOGBERRY It shall be suffigance. 50  
LEONATO Drink some wine ere you go. Fare you well.

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER My lord, they stay for you to give your  
daughter to her husband.

LEONATO I'll wait upon them. I am ready. 54  
[Exeunt Leonato and Messenger.]

DOGBERRY Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Sea- 55  
coal. Bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. We  
are now to examination these men. 56  
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VERGES And we must do it wisely.

DOGBERRY We will spare for no wit, I warrant you.  
Here's that shall drive some of them to a noncome. 60  
Only get the learned writer to set down our excom- 61  
munication, and meet me at the jail. [Exeunt.] 62

[4.1]

Enter Prince [Don Pedro], [Don John the  
Bastard], Leonato, Friar [Francis], Claudio,  
Benedick, Hero, and Beatrice [with attendants].

LEONATO Come, Friar Francis, be brief—only to the  
plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their  
particular duties afterwards.

FRIAR You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

CLAUDIO No.

LEONATO To be married to her. Friar, you come to  
marry her.

FRIAR Lady, you come hither to be married to this  
Count?

HERO I do.

FRIAR If either of you know any inward impediment 11

why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on  
your souls to utter it.

CLAUDIO Know you any, Hero?

HERO None, my lord.

FRIAR Know you any, Count?

LEONATO I dare make his answer: none.

CLAUDIO Oh, what men dare do! What men may do!  
What men daily do, not knowing what they do!

BENEDICK How now? Interjections? Why, then, some be 20  
of laughing, as, ah, ha, he! 21

CLAUDIO  
Stand thee by, Friar.—Father, by your leave, 22  
Will you with free and unconstrained soul  
Give me this maid, your daughter?

LEONATO  
As freely, son, as God did give her me.

CLAUDIO  
And what have I to give you back, whose worth  
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift? 27

DON PEDRO  
Nothing, unless you render her again.

CLAUDIO  
Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness. 29  
[He hands Hero to Leonato.]

There, Leonato, take her back again.  
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;  
She's but the sign and semblance of her honor. 32  
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!  
Oh, what authority and show of truth  
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!  
Comes not that blood as modest evidence 36  
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear, 37  
All you that see her, that she were a maid,  
By these exterior shows? But she is none:  
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed.  
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

LEONATO  
What do you mean, my lord?

CLAUDIO Not to be married, 42  
Not to knit my soul to an approvèd wanton. 43

LEONATO  
Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,  
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth, 44  
And made defeat of her virginity—

CLAUDIO  
I know what you would say: if I have known her, 47  
You will say, she did embrace me as a husband,  
And so extenuate the forehead sin. 49  
No, Leonato,  
I never tempted her with word too large, 51

35 God's . . . man i.e., God is good. (A proverbial saying.) 36 of on  
44 comprehended (For "apprehended.") aspicious (For "suspici-  
ous.") 50 suffigance (For "sufficient.") 54 wait upon attend  
55-6 Francis Seacoal i.e., the Sexton of 4.2, not George, the member of  
the watch in 3.3. 57 examination (For "examine.") 60 noncome  
(Probably an unintended contraction for *non compos mentis*, "not of  
sound mind," but Dogberry may have intended "nonplus.")  
61-2 excommunication (For "examination" or "communication.")  
61, Location: A church.  
11 Inward secret

20-1 some . . . he (Benedick quotes from Lilly's Latin grammar on the  
subject of interjections; according to Lilly, these are to be classified as  
laughing interjections.) 22 Stand thee by Stand aside 27 counter-  
poise balance, be equivalent to 29 learn teach 32 sign and sem-  
blance pretense and outward show 36 blood i.e., blush. modest  
evidence of modesty 37 witness bear witness to 40 luxu-  
rious lascivious, lustful 42 mean imply, suggest. (But Claudio bit-  
terly replies in the sense of "intend.") 43 approvèd proved 44 in . . .  
proof in making trial of her yourself 47 known her i.e., known her  
sexually 49 extenuate excuse, lessen. forehead sin sin of anticipat-  
ing (marriage). 51 large broad, immodest

But, as a brother to his sister, showed  
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

HERO  
And seemed I ever otherwise to you?

CLAUDIO  
Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it.  
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,  
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;  
But you are more intemperate in your blood  
Than Venus, or those pampered animals  
That rage in savage sensuality.

HERO  
Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

LEONATO  
Sweet Prince, why speak not you?

DON PEDRO  
What should I speak?  
I stand dishonored, that have gone about  
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

LEONATO  
Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

DON JOHN  
Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

BENEDICK This looks not like a nuptial.

HERO "True"! Oh, God!

CLAUDIO Leonato, stand I here?  
Is this the Prince? Is this the Prince's brother?  
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?

LEONATO  
All this is so. But what of this, my lord?

CLAUDIO  
Let me but move one question to your daughter,  
And by that fatherly and kindly power  
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

LEONATO [to Hero]  
I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

HERO  
Oh, God defend me, how am I beset!  
What kind of catechizing call you this?

CLAUDIO  
To make you answer truly to your name.

HERO  
Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name  
With any just reproach?

CLAUDIO  
Marry, that can Hero!  
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.  
What man was he talked with you yesternight  
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?  
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

HERO  
I talked with no man at that hour, my lord.

DON PEDRO  
Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,  
I am sorry you must hear. Upon mine honor,  
Myself, my brother, and this grievèd Count  
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night  
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber window,  
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,  
Confessed the vile encounters they have had  
A thousand times in secret.

DON JOHN  
Fie, fie, they are not to be named, my lord,  
Not to be spoke of!  
There is not chastity enough in language  
Without offense to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,  
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

CLAUDIO  
O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been  
If half thy outward graces had been placed  
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!  
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! Farewell,  
Thou pure impiety and impious purity!  
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,  
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,  
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,  
And never shall it more be gracious.

LEONATO  
Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

[Hero swoons.]

BEATRICE  
Why, how now, cousin, wherefore sink you down?

73 DON JOHN  
74 Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,  
Smother her spirits up.

[Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio.]

BENEDICK  
How doth the lady?

BEATRICE  
78 Dead, I think. Help, uncle!  
Hero, why, Hero! Uncle! Signor Benedick! Friar!

LEONATO  
O Fate, take not away thy heavy hand!  
Death is the fairest cover for her shame  
That may be wished for.

BEATRICE  
How now, cousin Hero?

FRIAR Have comfort, lady.  
82 LEONATO  
Dost thou look up?

FRIAR  
Yea, wherefore should she not?

LEONATO  
Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing  
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny  
The story that is printed in her blood?  
Do not live, Hero, do not open thine eyes;  
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,  
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shame,

55 Out . . . seeming! i.e., Shame on you, a mere semblance of good!  
56 Dian . . . orb i.e., Diana, goddess of chastity, enthroned in the  
moon 57 be blown open, flowering 61 wide wide of the mark.  
63 gone about undertaken 64 stale whore. 68 True (A response  
to Don John's use of the term.) 73 move put 74 kindly natural  
78 catechizing formal questioning used by the Church to teach the  
principles of faith. The first question in the Church of England's cat-  
echism is, "What is your name?" 82 Hero itself The very name of  
Hero (who, in the story of Hero and Leander, is the faithful tragic  
heroine)

89 grievèd (1) aggrieved, wronged (2) struck with grief 92 liberal  
licentious 99 much misgovernment gross misconduct. 105 For  
thee Because of you 106 conjecture evil suspicion 108 be gracious  
seem attractive, graceful. 110, 119 wherefore why 122 blood i.e.,  
blushes. 125 spirits life-giving energies, vital powers

## OTHELLO

And I loved her that she did pity them.  
This only is the witchcraft I have used.  
Here comes the lady. Let her witness it.

Enter Desdemona, Iago, ~~Brabantio~~

## DUKE

I think this tale would win my daughter too.  
Good Brabantio,  
Take up this mangled matter at the best.  
Men do their broken weapons rather use  
Than their bare hands.

## BRABANTIO

I pray you, hear her speak.  
If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head if my bad blame  
Light on the man!—Come hither, gentle mistress.  
Do you perceive in all this noble company  
Where most you owe obedience?

## DESDEMONA

My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty.  
To you I am bound for life and education;  
My life and education both do learn me  
How to respect you. You are the lord of duty;  
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband,  
And so much duty as my mother showed  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor my lord.

## BRABANTIO

God be with you! I have done.  
Please it Your Grace, on to the state affairs.  
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.  
Come hither, Moor. *[He joins the hands of Othello  
and Desdemona.]*

I here do give thee that with all my heart  
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,  
I am glad at soul I have no other child,  
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,  
To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

## DUKE

Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence  
Which, as a grece or step, may help these lovers  
Into your favor.  
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended  
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.  
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.  
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,  
Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.

The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief;  
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief. 212

## BRABANTIO

So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile,  
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.  
He bears the sentence well that nothing bears  
But the free comfort which from thence he hears,  
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow  
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.  
These sentences, to sugar or to gall,  
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.  
But words are words. I never yet did hear  
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.  
I humbly beseech you, proceed to th' affairs of state.

## DUKE

The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes  
for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best  
known to you; and though we have there a substitute  
of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign  
mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you.  
You must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of  
your new fortunes with this more stubborn and  
boisterous expedition. 231

## OTHELLO

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
My thrice-driven bed of down. I do agnize  
A natural and prompt alacrity  
I find in hardness, and do undertake  
These present wars against the Ottomites.  
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,  
I crave fit disposition for my wife,  
Due reference of place and exhibition,  
With such accommodation and besort  
As levels with her breeding. 242

## DUKE

Why, at her father's.

## BRABANTIO

I will not have it so.

## OTHELLO

Nor I.

## DESDEMONA

Nor I. I would not there reside,  
To put my father in impatient thoughts  
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,  
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear, 247

212 spends a bootless grief indulges in unavailing grief. 215-18 He bears . . . borrow A person can easily be comforted by your maxim that enjoys its platitudinous comfort without having to experience the misfortune that occasions sorrow, but anyone whose grief bankrupts his poor patience is left with your saying and his sorrow, too. (Bears the sentence also plays on the meaning, "receives judicial sentence.") 219-20 These . . . equivocal These fine maxims are equivocal, being equally appropriate to happiness or bitterness. 222 pierced . . . ear relieved by mere words reaching it through the ear. 225 fortitude strength 226 substitute deputy 227 allowed acknowledged 227-8 opinion . . . on you general opinion, an important determiner of affairs, chooses you as the best man. 229 slubber soil, sully 230-1 stubborn . . . expedition rough and violent expedition, for which haste is needed. 234 thrice-driven thrice sifted, winnowed. agnize know in myself, acknowledge 236 hardness hardship 238 bending . . . state bowing or kneeling to your authority 240-2 Due . . . breeding proper respect for her place (as my wife) and maintenance, with such suitable provision and attendance as befits her upbringing. 247 my unfolding what I shall unfold or say. prosperous favorable

175 Take . . . best make the best of a bad bargain. 184 education upbringing 185 learn teach 186 of duty to whom duty is due 190 challenge claim 194 get beget 196 with all my heart wherein my whole affection has been engaged 197 with all my heart willingly, gladly 198 For your sake Because of you 200 escape elopement 201 clogs (Literally, blocks of wood fastened to the legs of criminals or animals to inhibit escape.) 202 like yourself i.e., as you would, in your proper temper. lay a sentence apply a maxim 203 grece step 205-6 When . . . depended When all hope of remedy is past, our sorrows are ended by realizing that the worst has already happened which lately we hoped would not happen. 207 mischief mischief 208 next nearest 209-10 What . . . makes When fortune takes away what cannot be saved, patience makes a mockery of fortune's wrongdoing.

2602-2649 • 2650-2689

Unto the judge that begged it and indeed  
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,  
That took some pains in writing, he begged mine;  
And neither man nor master would take aught  
But the two rings.

PORTIA [to Bassanio] What ring gave you, my lord?  
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

BASSANIO  
If I could add a lie unto a fault,  
I would deny it; but you see my finger  
Hath not the ring upon it. It is gone.

PORTIA  
Even so void is your false heart of truth.  
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed  
Until I see the ring!

NERISSA [to Gratiano] Nor I in yours  
Till I again see mine.

BASSANIO Sweet Portia,  
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,  
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,  
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,  
And how unwillingly I left the ring,  
When naught would be accepted but the ring,  
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA  
If you had known the virtue of the ring,  
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,  
Or your own honor to contain the ring,  
You would not then have parted with the ring.  
What man is there so much unreasonable,  
If you had pleased to have defended it  
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty  
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?  
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:  
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO  
No, by my honor, madam! By my soul,  
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,  
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me  
And begged the ring, the which I did deny him  
And suffered him to go displeas'd away—  
Even he that had held up the very life  
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?  
I was enforced to send it after him.  
I was beset with shame and courtesy.  
My honor would not let ingratitude  
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady!  
For by these blessed candles of the night,  
Had you been there, I think you would have begged  
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA  
Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.  
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,  
And that which you did swear to keep for me,  
I will become as liberal as you:

I'll not deny him anything I have,  
No, not my body nor my husband's bed.  
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.  
Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus;  
If you do not, if I be left alone,  
Now, by mine honor, which is yet mine own,  
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

NERISSA  
And I his clerk; therefore be well advised  
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRATIANO  
Well, do you so. Let not me take him, then!  
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO  
I am th'unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA  
Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

BASSANIO  
Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong,  
And in the hearing of these many friends  
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes  
Wherein I see myself—

PORTIA Mark you but that!  
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;  
In each eye, one. Swear by your double self,  
And there's an oath of credit.

BASSANIO Nay, but hear me.  
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear  
I never more will break an oath with thee.

ANTONIO  
I once did lend my body for his wealth,  
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,  
Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,  
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord  
Will nevermore break faith advisedly.

PORTIA  
Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,  
And bid him keep it better than the other.  
[She gives the ring to Antonio, who gives it to Bassanio.]

ANTONIO  
Here, Lord Bassanio. Swear to keep this ring.

BASSANIO  
By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

PORTIA  
I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio,  
For by this ring the doctor lay with me.

NERISSA  
And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,  
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,  
In lieu of this last night did lie with me.  
[Presenting her ring.]

189 aught anything 199 virtue moral efficacy 201 contain keep safe 205 wanted the modesty who would have been so lacking in consideration as 206 urge insist upon receiving. ceremony something sacred. 210 civil doctor i.e., doctor of civil law 213 suffered allowed 219 it i.e., my honor. 220 blessed . . . night i.e., stars 226 liberal generous (sexually as well as otherwise)

229 Know (With the suggestion of carnal knowledge.) 230 from away from. Argus mythological monster with a hundred eyes 232 honor (1) honorable name (2) chastity 234 be well advised take care 236 take apprehend 237 pen (With sexual double meaning.) 245 double i.e., deceitful 246 of credit worthy to be believed. (Said ironically.) 249 wealth welfare 252 My . . . forfeit at the risk of eternal damnation 253 advisedly intentionally. 254 surety guarantor. 262 In lieu of in return for

GRATIANO

Why, this is like the mending of highways  
 In summer, where the ways are fair enough.  
 What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

264  
265

PORTIA

Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed.  
 Here is a letter; read it at your leisure.

[*She gives a letter.*]

It comes from Padua, from Bellario.  
 There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,  
 Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here  
 Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,  
 And even but now returned; I have not yet  
 Entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome,  
 And I have better news in store for you  
 Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon.

[*She gives him a letter.*]

There you shall find three of your argosies  
 Are richly come to harbor suddenly.  
 You shall not know by what strange accident  
 I chanced on this letter.

ANTONIO

I am dumb.

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BASSANIO [*to Portia*]

Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

GRATIANO [*to Nerissa*]

Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

NERISSA

Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,  
 Unless he live until he be a man.

BASSANIO

Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow.

When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

ANTONIO

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;  
 For here I read for certain that my ships  
 Are safely come to road.

PORTIA

How now, Lorenzo?

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

NERISSA

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

[*She gives a devil.*]

There do I give to you and Jessica,  
 From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,  
 After his death, of all he dies possessed of.

LORENZO

Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way  
 Of starved people.

PORTIA

It is almost morning,  
 And yet I am sure you are not satisfied  
 Of these events at full. Let us go in;  
 And charge us there upon inter'gatories,  
 And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRATIANO

Let it be so. The first inter'gatory  
 That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is  
 Whether till the next night she had rather stay  
 Or go to bed now, being two hours to day.  
 But were the day come, I should wish it dark  
 Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk.  
 Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing  
 So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

Exeunt.

264 are fair enough i.e., are not in need of repair. 265 cuckolds husbands whose wives are unfaithful 279 dumb at a loss for words.

288 road anchorage. 294 manna the food from heaven that was miraculously supplied to the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16) 298 And . . . inter'gatories and put questions to us (as in a court of law) 302 stay wait 305 couching going to bed 307 ring (With sexual suggestion.)